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CENTENARY EDITION

THE WORKS OF
THOMAS CARLYLE
IN THIRTY VOLUMES

VOL. XXI

GERMAN ROMANCE

WITH BIOGRAPHICAL AND

CRITICAL NOTICES

I

Musæus.

THOMAS CARLYLE

GERMAN ROMANCE

TRANSLATIONS
FROM THE GERMAN

WITH BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL NOTICES

IN TWO VOLUMES

I

MUSÆUS

DE LA MOTTE FOUQUE

TIECK

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INTRODUCTION

The works composing this volume date from the most arduous period in Carlyle's career. Success had not yet dawned upon him; his means were still painfully narrow; and he had just entered upon the doubtful experiment of matrimony. He was at this time supporting himself wholly by contributions to the literary reviews, and had not yet obtained that admiring acceptance among their editors which he was afterwards to acquire. He had tried verse-writing with results discouraging, at any rate, to every one but himself; and had proved even to his own satisfaction that he was quite unfitted for novel-writing. Naturally he was glad in such circumstances to accept any literary employment which was offered him; and the nature of this particular commission is described with much candour in a note to the collected Edition of 1857, wherein he speaks of *German Romance* as 'a Book of Translations, not of my suggesting or desiring, but of my executing as honest journeywork in defect of better.' He could, of course, hardly speak with so much freedom as this in the preface to the original edition, yet it is not difficult even there to discern evidences of his personal indifference to, if not positive distaste for, his work, and of his disturbing doubts as to whether it was worth performing at all. The following, for instance, is anything but an enthusiastic account of the romantic material from which he had to select:—

'In Germany, accordingly, as in other countries, the Novelists are a mixed, innumerable, and most productive race. Interspersed with a few Poets, we behold whole legions and hosts of Poetasters, in all stages of worthlessness; here languishing in the transports of Sentimentality, there dancing the St.-Vitus dance of hard-studied Wit and Humour; some

soaring on bold pinion into the thundery regions of *Atala, ou les Amours de deux Sauvages*; some diving, on as bold fin, into the gory profundities of *Frankenstein* and *The Vampyre*; and very many travelling, contented in spirit, the ancient beaten highway of Commonplace. To discover the grain of truth among this mass of falsehood, especially where Time has not yet exercised its separating influence was no plain problem; nor can I flatter myself either that I have exhausted the search, or in no case been deceived in my selection.'

A more discouraging 'foreword' can seldom have been penned; and one cannot but admire the magnanimity of the publisher who could print it without remonstrance.

Carlyle, however, goes on to point out other serious difficulties in the way of satisfactory selection. The field open to him was severely limited by causes for which neither he nor his authors could be held responsible; so that, as he puts it, 'often not the excellence of a work but the humble considerations of its size, its subject, and its being untranslated, had to determine my choice.' This fact, he adds, has especially to be borne in mind with regard to two of the authors, Fouqué and Richter. The former's best-known work *Undine* had already found a translator, and both the *Hesperus* and the *Titan* of the latter were no doubt deemed inadmissible on the ground of length. But to us in these days the choice of authors seems much more curious than the selection from among their works—so unequal do they now appear in merit, and so vastly does one of them tower over the rest. Whether Jean Paul *der einzige* still enjoys the reputation among his countrymen which once was his, or whether, unlike his great English admirer, and in some sense imitator, he has failed to reconcile posterity by sheer force of genius to the eccentricities of his style, I hardly know; but, as compared with his companions in these volumes, there can be no doubt of his superior claims to posthumous life. Musæus, Tieck, Hoffmann, Fouqué, are none of them lacking in merit of various kinds, but for humour and imagination, for power of thought and mastery of language, the strongest of them will not bear comparison with Richter.

Even the differences among themselves are marked, and their conjunction is not to be wholly accounted for on the score of a common vogue. Ludwig Tieck indeed reached the zenith of his fame and the height of his productive activity in the first quarter of the present century; and though the new romantic movement, of which he was one of the pioneers, had by that time exhausted itself, the versatility of his powers enabled him to retain his hold upon the public by his work in a totally different *genre*. Fouqué had captured the European world by his *Undine* in 1814, and Hoffmann's feverish activity had only closed with his life in 1823. But Musæus when the Translations appeared had been forty years in the grave, and it is difficult to believe that such reputation as he enjoyed in his lifetime had so long survived him. It is perhaps not fanciful to believe that remote as are both Tieck and he from the modern fashions of romance, one can detect an air of the archaic and out of date about the earlier as compared with the later writer. Carlyle's criticism of both of them—'journeywork' applies only to his task of translation—is as sympathetic as he knew how to make it. The truth is that he has evidently described the variety of Tieck's gifts and the versatility of his powers as a romancer from a more extensive study of his works than the specimens, which alone with his limited choice he was able to give, are at all well calculated to illustrate. They are all of what may be called the seriously romantic order, quite devoid either of the symbolic or of the satirical suggestion which might have interested Carlyle in them. As it is, his too obvious want of sympathy with them and with their whole *genre* betrays him into an almost comically apologetic tone. He tells the reader, plump and plain, that he cannot boast of having 'any very certain, still less any very flattering presentiment' respecting their reception; that their merits, 'such as they have, are not of a kind to force themselves on the reader,' who, on the other hand, is 'seldom inclined to search out merit for himself'; that 'the ordinary lovers of witch and fairy matter will remark a deficiency of spectres and

enchantments' and 'will complain that the whole is rather dull,' while 'cultivated freethinkers again, well knowing that no ghosts or elves exist in the country, will smile at the crackbrained dreamer with his spelling-book prose and doggerel verse, and dismiss him good-naturedly as a German Lake-poet.' With which parting commendation of a romancer whose merits are so unobtrusive as to be virtually non-existent, and whose stories are likely to prove equally disappointing to those who like fairy tales and those who do not, this truly singular preface is brought to a close.

Widely different is the manner in which Carlyle introduces Richter to his reader. Here he was dealing with a writer for whom he felt genuine admiration and love; and he discourses of him with a spirit and an eloquence which we look for in vain in the other three introductory essays. His sketch of Jean Paul's literary genius is a mere outline compared with the fuller and more finished portrait of the *Miscellanies*; but even this brief appreciation of the German humorist contains many passages of striking power, and one in particular of almost autobiographic significance. To characterise the works of Richter 'would,' he says, 'be difficult after the fullest inspection; to describe them to the English reader would be next to impossible.'

'Whether poetical, philosophical, didactic, or fantastic, they seem all to be emblems, more or less complete, of the singular mind where they originated. As a whole, the first perusal of them, more particularly to a foreigner, is almost infallibly offensive; and neither their meaning, nor their no-meaning, is to be discerned without long and sedulous study. They are a tropical wilderness, full of endless tortuosities; but with the fairest flowers, and the coolest fountains; now overarching us with high umbrageous gloom, now opening in long gorgeous vistas. We wander through them enjoying their wild grandeur; and by degrees our half-contemptuous wonder at the Author passes into reverence and love. His face was long hid from us: but we see him at length in the firm shape of spiritual manhood; a vast and most singular nature, but vindicating his singular nature by the force, the beauty and benignity which pervade it. In fine, we joyfully accept him for what he is, and was

meant to be. The graces, the polish, the sprightly elegances which belong to men of lighter make, we cannot look for or demand from him. His movement is essentially slow and cumbrous, for he advances not with one faculty, but with a whole mind ; with intellect, and pathos, and wit, and humour, and imagination, moving onward like a mighty host, motley, ponderous, irregular and irresistible. He is not airy, sparkling and precise, but deep, billowy and vast. The melody of his nature is not expressed in common note-marks, nor written down by the critical gamut; for it is wild and manifold; its voice is like the voice of cataracts and the sounding of primeval forests. To feeble ears it is discord, but to ears that understand it deep majestic music.

De te fabula narratur. Carlyle had not yet found his later and characteristic manner; but the time was not far distant when almost every line of this picturesque description was to become applicable to himself.

H. D. TRAILL.

CARLYLE'S PREFACE

It were unhappy for me if the reader should expect in this Work any full view of so complex a subject as German Novelwriting, or of so motley a body as the German Novelwriters. The dead wall, which divides us from this as from all other provinces of German Literature, I must not dream that I have anywhere overturned: at the most, I may have perforated it with a few loopholes, of narrow aperture truly, and scanty range; through which, however, a studious eye may perhaps discern some limited, but, as I hope, genuine and distinctive features of the singular country, which, on the other side, has long flourished in such abundant variety of intellectual scenery and product, and been unknown to us, though at our very hand. For this wall, what is the worst property in such walls, is to most of us an invisible one; and our eye rests contentedly on Vacancy, or distorted *Fata-morganas*, where a great and true-minded people have been living and labouring, in the light of Science and Art, for many ages.

In such an undertaking as the present, fragmentary in its very nature, it is not absolute, but only relative completeness, that can be looked for. German Novelwriters are easily come at; but *the* German Novelwriters are a class of persons whom no prudent editor will hope to exhibit, and no reader will engage to examine, even in the briefest mode of specimen. To say nothing of what has been accumulated in past generations, the number of Novelists at present alive and active is

to be reckoned not in units, but in thousands. No Leipzig Fair is unattended by its mob of gentlemen that write with ease; each duly offering his new novel, among the other fancy-goods and fustians of that great emporium. Lafontaine, for example, has already passed his hundredth volume. The inspirations of the Artist are rare and transient, but the hunger of the manufacturer is universal and incessant. The novel, too, is among the simplest forms of composition; a free arena for all sorts and degrees of talent, and may be worked in equally by a Henry Fielding and a Doctor Polydore. In Germany, accordingly, as in other countries, the Novelists are a mixed, innumerable, and most productive race. Interspersed with a few Poets, we behold whole legions and hosts of Poetasters, in all stages of worthlessness; here languishing in the transports of Sentimentality, there dancing the St.-Vitus dance of hard-studied Wit and Humour; some soaring on bold pinion into the thundery regions of *Atala, ou les Amours de deux Sauvages*; some diving, on as bold fin, into the gory profundities of *Frankenstein* and *The Vampyre*; and very many travelling, contented in spirit, the ancient beaten highway of Commonplace.

To discover the grain of truth among this mass of falsehood, especially where time had not yet exercised its separating influence, was no plain problem; nor can I flatter myself either that I have exhausted the search, or in no case been deceived in my selection. The strength of German Literature does not lie in its Novelwriters; few of its greatest minds have put forth their full power in this department; many of them, of course, have not attempted it at all. In the seventeenth century, and prior, there was nothing whatever to be gleaned; though Anton Ulrich, Duke of Brunswick Wolfenbüttel, had laid aside his sceptre, to write a novel,[1] in six thousand eight

[1] *Die Durchlauchtigste Syrerin Aramena* (Her Most Serene Majesty Aramena of Syria), 1669. On the whole, it is simple enough of our Magazines to inform us that the literature, nay, sometimes it is also the language, of Germany, began to be cultivated in the time of Frederick II. If the names of Hutten, Opitz,

hundred and twenty-two pages. Klopstock, Herder, Lessing, in the eighteenth century, wrote no novels: the same might almost be said of Schiller; for his fragment of the *Geisterseher* (Ghost-seer), and his Magazine-story of the *Verbrecher aus verlorener Ehre* (Criminal from Loss of Honour), youthful attempts, and both I believe already in English, scarcely form an exception. The elder Jacobi's *Woldemar* and *Allwill* I was forced, not without consciousness of their merits, to pass over as too abstruse and didactic; for a like reason of didacticality, though in a far different sense, Wieland could afford me nothing which seemed worthy of himself and our present idea of him; and Klinger's *Faust*, the product evidently of a rugged, vehement, substantial mind, seemed much too harsh, infernal, and unpoetical for English readers. Of Novalis and his wonderful fragments, I could not hope that their depth and wizard beauty would be seen across their mysticism. Other meritorious names I may have omitted, from ignorance. Maler Müller's I was obliged to omit, because none of his fictions were, properly speaking, novels; and unwillingly obliged, for his plays and idyls bespeak a true artist; and the English reader would do well, by the earliest opportunity, to substitute the warm and vigorous *Adam's Awakening* of Müller, for Gessner's rather faint and washy *Death of Abel*, in forming a judgment of the German Idyl.

A graver objection than that of omissions, is that, in my selections, I have not always fixed upon the best performance of my author; and to this I have unhappily no contradiction to give, nor any answer to make, except that it lay not in the nature of my task to avoid it; and that often not the excellence of a work, but the humble considerations of its size, its subject, and its being untranslated, had to determine my choice. In justice to our strangers, the reader will be pleased

Lohenstein, etc. etc. are naturally unknown to us, we ought really to have heard of Luther. Nay, was not *Jacob Böhme* rendered into huge folios, with incomparable diagrams, in the time of James I.? And is not Hans Sachs known (by name at least) to all barbers?

to bear this fact in mind: with regard to two of them, to Fouqué and Richter, it is especially necessary.

By a secondary arrangement, in surveying what seemed the chief names among the German Novelwriters, we have also obtained a view of the chief modes of German Novelwriting. The *Mährchen* (Popular Tale), a favourite, almost tritical topic among the Germans, is here twice handled; in what may be called the prosaic manner (by Musäus), and in the poetical (by Tiecke). Of the *Ritterroman* (Chivalry Romance) there is also a specimen (by Fouqué); a short one, yet I fear, in many judgments, too long. Hoffmann's *Golden Pot* belongs to a strange sort (the Fantasy-piece), of which he himself was the originator, and which its sedulous cultivation, by minds more willing than able, bids fair, in no great length of time, to explode. Richter's two works correspond to our common English notion of the Novel; and Goethe's is a *Kunstroman* (Art-novel), a species highly prized by the Germans, and of which *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, the first in date, is also in their mind greatly the first in excellence.

If the reader will impress himself with a clear view of these six kinds; and then conceive some hundreds of persons incessantly occupied in imitating, compounding, separating, distorting, exaggerating, diluting them, he may have formed as correct an idea of the actual state of German Novelwriting, as it seemed easy with such means to afford him. On the general merits and characteristics of these works, it is for the reader and not me to pass judgment. One thing it will behove him not to lose sight of: They are German Novelists, not English ones; and their Germanhood I have all along regarded as a quality, not as a fault. To expect, therefore, that the style of them shall accord in all points with our English taste, were to expect that it should be a false and hollow style. Every nation has its own form of character and life; and the mind which gathers no nourishment from the every-day circumstances of its existence, will in general be but scantily nourished. Of writers that hover on the confines of faultless

vacuity, that write not by vision but by hearsay, and so belong to all nations, or, more properly speaking, to none, there is no want in Germany more than in any other country. It would be easy to fill, not four, but four hundred volumes with German Novelists of this unblamable description; thereby to refresh the reader with long processions of spotless romances, bright and stately, like so many frontispieces in *La Belle Assemblée*, with cheeks of the fairest carnation, lips of the gentlest curvature, and most perfect Grecian noses, and no shade of character or meaning to mar their pure idealness. But so long as our Minerva Press and its many branch-establishments do their duty, to import ware of that sort into these Islands seems unnecessary.

On the whole, as the light of a very small taper may be useful in total darkness, I have sometimes hoped that this little enterprise might assist, in its degree, to forward an acquaintance with the Germans and their literature; a literature and a people both well worthy of our study. Translations, in this point of view, can be of little avail, except in so far as they excite us to a much more general study of the language. The difficulties of German are little more than a bugbear: they can only be compared to those of Greek by persons claiming praise or pudding for having mastered them. Three months of moderate diligence will carry any man, almost without assistance of a master, over its prime obstacles; and the rest is play rather than labour.

To judge from the signs of the times, this general diffusion of German among us seems a consummation not far distant. As an individual, I cannot but anticipate from it some little evil and much good; and look forward with pleasure to the time when a people who have listened with the most friendly placidity to criticisms[1] of the slenderest nature from

[1] Voltaire's patronising letter to Ramler, in which he condescends to grant the Germans some privileges of literary citizenship, on the strength of "Monsieur Gottched" (Gottsched, long ago acknowledged as the true German

us, may be more fitly judged of; and thirty millions of men, speaking in the same old Saxon tongue, and thinking in the same old Saxon spirit with ourselves, may be admitted to the rights of brotherhood which they have long deserved, and which it is we chiefly that suffer by withholding.

Antichrist of Wit) is still held in remembrance; so likewise is the Père Bouhours's extremely satirical inquiry, *Si un Allemand peut avoir de l'esprit?*

MUSÆUS

JOHANN AUGUST MUSÆUS

Johann August Musæus was born in the year 1735, at Jena, where his father then held the office of Judge. The quick talents, and kind lively temper of the boy, recommended him to the affection of his uncle, Herr Weissenborn, Superintendent at Allstadt, who took him to his house, and treated him in all respects like a son. Johann was then in his ninth year: a few months afterwards, his uncle was promoted to the post of General Superintendent at Eisenach; a change which did not alter the domestic condition of the nephew, though it replaced him in the neighbourhood of his parents; for his father had also been transferred to Eisenach, in the capacity of Councillor and Police Magistrate. With this hospitable relative he continued till his nineteenth year.

Old Weissenborn had no children of his own, and he determined that his foster-child should have a liberal education. In due time he placed him at the University of Jena, as a student of theology. It is not likely that the inclinations of the youth himself had been particularly consulted in this arrangement; nevertheless he appears to have studied with sufficient diligence; for in the usual period of three years and a half, he obtained his degree of Master, and what was then a proof of more than ordinary merit, was elected a member of the *German Society*. With these titles, and the groundwork of a solid culture, he returned to Eisenach, to wait for an appointment in the Church, of which he was now licentiate.

For several years, though he preached with ability, and not without approval, no appointment presented itself; and when at last a country-living in the neighbourhood of Eisenach was offered him, the people stoutly resisted the admission of

their new pastor, on the ground, says his Biographer, that "he had once been seen dancing." It may be, however, that the sentence of the peasants was not altogether so infirm as this its alleged very narrow basis would betoken: judging from external circumstances, it by no means appears that devotion was at any time the chief distinction of the new candidate; and to a simple rustic flock, his shining talents, unsupported by zeal, would be empty and unprofitable as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. At all events, this hindrance closed his theological career: it came in good season to withdraw him from a calling, in which, whether willingly or unwillingly adopted, his history must have been dishonest and contemptible, and his gifts could never have availed him.

Musäus had now lost his profession; but his resources were not limited to one department of activity, and he was still young enough to choose another. His temper was gay and kindly; his faculties of mind were brilliant, and had now been improved by years of steady industry. His residence at Eisenach had not been spent in scrutinising the phases of church preferment, or dancing attendance on patrons and dignitaries: he had stored his mind with useful and ornamental knowledge; and from his remote watch-tower, his keen eye had discerned the movements of the world, and firm judgments of its wisdom and its folly were gathering form in his thoughts. In his twenty-fifth year he became an author; a satirist, and, what is rarer, a just one. Germany, by the report of its enemies and lukewarm friends, is seldom long without some Idol; some author of superhuman endowments, some system that promises to renovate the earth, some science destined to conduct, by a north-west passage, to universal knowledge. At this period, the Brazen Image of the day was our English Richardson; his novels had been translated into German with unbounded acceptance;[1] and

[1] See the Letters of Meta, Klopstock's lady, in *Richardson's Life and Correspondence.*

Grandison was figuring in many weak heads as the sole model of a true Christian gentleman. Musäus published his *German Grandison* in 1760; a work of good omen as a first attempt, and received with greater favour than the popularity of its victim seemed to promise. It coöperated with Time in removing this spiritual epidemic; and appears to have survived its object, for it was reprinted in 1781.

The success of his anonymous parody, however gratifying to the youthful author, did not tempt him to disclose his name, and still less to think of literature as a profession. With his cool sceptical temper, he was little liable to overestimate his talents, or the prizes set up for them; and he longed much less for a literary existence than for a civic one. In 1763, his wish to a certain extent was granted: he became Tutor of the Pages in the Court of Weimar; which office, after seven punctual and laborious years, he exchanged for a professorship in the *Gymnasium*, or public school of the same town. He had now married; and amid the cares and pleasures of providing for a family, and keeping house like an honest burgher, the dreams of fame had faded still farther from his mind. The emoluments of his post were small; but his heart was light, and his mind humble: to increase his income he gave private lessons in history and the like, "to young ladies and gentlemen of quality"; and for several years took charge of a few boarders. The names of Wieland and Goethe had now risen on the world, while his own was still under the horizon: but this obscurity, enjoying as he did the kind esteem of all his many personal acquaintances, he felt to be a very light evil; and participated without envy in whatever entertainment or instruction his famed contemporaries could afford him. With literature he still occupied his leisure; he had read and reflected much; but for any public display of his acquirements he was making no preparation, and feeling no anxiety.

After an interval of nineteen years, the appearance of a new idol again called forth his iconoclastic faculty. Lavater

had left his parsonage among the Alps, and set out on a cruise over Europe, in search of proselytes and striking physiognomies. His theories, supported by his personal influence, and the honest rude ardour of his character, became the rage in Germany; and men, women, and children were immersed in promoting philanthropy, and studying the human mind. Whereupon Musäus grasped his satirical hammer; and with lusty strokes defaced and unshrined the false divinity. His *Physiognomical Travels*, which appeared in 1779, is still ranked by the German critics among the happiest productions of its kind in their literature; and still read for its wit and acuteness, and genial overflowing humour, though the object it attacked has long ago become a reminiscence. At the time of its publication, when everything conspired to give its qualities their full effect, the applause it gained was instant and general. The author had, as in the former case, concealed his name: but the public curiosity soon penetrated the secret, which he had now no interest in keeping; and Musäus was forthwith enrolled among the lights of his day and generation; and courteous readers crowded to him from far and near, to see his face, and pay him the tribute of their admiration. This unlooked-for celebrity he valued at its just price; continuing to live as if it were not; gratified chiefly in his character of father, at having found an honest means of improving his domestic circumstances, and enlarging the comforts of his family. The ground was now broken, and he was not long in digging deeper.

The popular traditions of Germany, so numerous and often so impressive, had attracted his attention; and their rugged Gothic vigour, saddened into sternness or venerable grace by the flight of ages, became dearer to his taste, as he looked abroad upon the mawkish deluge of Sentimentality, with which *The Sorrows of Werter* had been the innocent signal for a legion of imitators to drown the land. The spirit of German imagination seemed but ill represented by these tearful persons, who, if their hearts were full, minded little

though their heads were empty: their spasmodic tenderness made no imposing figure beside the gloomy strength, which might still in fragments be discerned in their distant predecessors. Of what has been preserved from age to age by living memory alone, the chance is that it possesses some intrinsic merit: its very existence declares it to be adapted to some form of our common nature, and therefore calculated more or less to interest all its forms. It struck Musäus that these rude traditionary fragments might be worked anew into shape and polish, and transferred from the hearths of the common people to the parlours of the intellectual and refined. He determined on forming a series of *Volksmährchen*, or Popular Traditionary Tales; a task of more originality and smaller promise in those days than it would be now. In the collection of materials he spared no pains; and despised no source of intelligence, however mean. He would call children from the street; become a child along with them, listen to their nursery tales, and reward his tiny narrators with a *dreyer* apiece. Sometimes he assembled a knot of old women, with their spinning-wheels, about him; and amid the hum of their industrious implements, gathered stories of the ancient time from the lips of the garrulous sisterhood. Once his wife had been out paying visits: on opening the parlour-door at her return, she was met by a villainous cloud of tobacco-smoke; and venturing forward through the haze, she found her husband seated by the stove, in company with an old soldier, who was smoking vehemently on his black stump of a pipe, and charming his landlord, between whiffs, with legendary lore.

The *Volksmährchen*, in five little volumes, appeared in 1782. They soon rose into favour with a large class of readers; and while many generations of novels have since that time been ushered into being, and conducted out of it, they still survive, increasing in popularity rather than declining. This preëminence is owing less to the ancient materials, than to the author's way of treating them. The primitive

tradition often serves him only as a vehicle for interesting description, shrewd sarcastic speculation, and gay fanciful pleasantry, extending its allusions over all things past and present, now rising into comic humour, now sinking into drollery, often tasteless, strained, or tawdry, but never dull. The traces of poetry and earnest imagination, here and there discernible in the original fiction, he treats with levity and kind sceptical derision: nothing is required of the reader but what all readers are prepared to give. Since the publication of this work, the subject of popular tradition has been handled to triteness; *Volksmährchen* have been written and collected without stint or limit; and critics, in admitting that Musäus was the first to open this mine of entertainment, have lamented the incongruity between his subject and his style. But the faculty of laughing has been given to all men, and the feeling of imaginative beauty has been given only to a few; the lovers of primeval poetry, in its unadulterated state, may censure Musäus; but they join with the public at large in reading him.

This book of *Volksmährchen* established the character of its author for wit and general talent, and forms the chief support of his reputation with posterity. A few years after, he again appeared before the public with a humorous performance, entitled *Friend Hein's Apparitions, in the style of Holberg*, printed in 1785. *Friend Hein* is a name under which Musäus, for what reason his commentator Wieland seems unable to inform us, usually personifies Death: the essay itself, which I have never seen, may be less irreverent and offensive to pious feeling than its title indicates, and it is said to abound with "wit, humour and knowledge of life," as much as any of his former works. He had also begun a second series of Tales, under the title of *Straussfedern* (Ostrich-feathers): but only the first volume had appeared, when death put a period to his labours. He had long been in weakly health; often afflicted with violent headaches: his disorder was a polypus of the heart, which cut him off on

the 28th of October 1787, in the fifty-second year of his age. The *Straussfedern* was completed by another hand; and a small volume of *Remains*, edited by Kotzebue in 1791, concludes the list of his writings. A simple but tasteful memorial, we are told, was erected over his grave by some unknown friend.

Musäus was a practical believer in the Horatian maxim, *Nil admirari*: of a jovial heart and a penetrating well-cultivated understanding, he saw things as they were, and had little disposition or aptitude to invest them with any colours but their own. Without much effort, therefore, he stood aloof from every species of cant; and *was* the man he thought himself, and wished others to think him. Had his temper been unsocial and melancholic, such a creed might have rendered him spiteful, narrow and selfish: but nature had been kinder to him than education; he did not quarrel with the world, though he saw its barrenness, and knew not how to make it solemn any more than lovely; for his heart was gay and kind; and an imperturbable good-humour, more potent than a panoply of brass, defended him from the stings and arrows of outrageous Fortune to the end of his pilgrimage. Few laughers have walked so circumspectly, and acquired or merited so much affection. By profession a Momus, he looked upon the world as little else than a boundless Chase, where the wise were to recreate themselves with the hunting of Follies; and perhaps he is the only satirist on record of whom it can be said that his jesting never cost him a friend. His humour is, indeed, untinctured with bitterness; sportful, ebullient and guileless as the frolics of a child. He could not reverence men; but with all their faults he loved them; for they were his brethren, and their faults were not clearer to him than his own. He inculcated or entertained no lofty principles of generosity; yet though never rich in purse, he was always ready to divide his pittance with a needier fellow-man. Of vanity he showed little or none: in obscurity he was contented; and when his honours came, he wore them meekly,

and was the last to see that they were merited. In society he was courteous and yielding; a universal favourite; in his chosen circle, the most fascinating of companions. From the slenderest trifle, he could spin a boundless web of drollery; and his brilliant mirth enlivened without wounding. With the foibles of others, he abstained from meddling; but among his friends, we are informed, he could for hours keep the table in a roar, when, with his dry, inimitable vein, he started some banter on himself or his wife; and, in trustful abandonment, laid the reins on the neck of his fancy to pursue it. Without enthusiasm of character, or any pretension to high or even earnest qualities, he was a well-conditioned, laughter-loving, kindly man; led a gay, jestful life; conquering by contentment and mirth of heart the long series of difficulties and distresses with which it assailed him; and died regretted by his nation, as a forwarder of harmless pleasure; and by those that knew him better, as a truthful, unassuming, affectionate, and, on the whole, very estimable person.

His intellectual character corresponds with his moral and social one; not high or glorious, but genuine so far as it goes. He does not approach the first rank of writers; he attempts not to deal with the deeper feelings of the heart; and for instructing the judgment, he ranks rather as a sound, well-informed, common-sense thinker, than as a man of high wisdom or originality. He advanced few new truths, but he dressed many old ones in sprightly apparel; and it ought to be remembered, that he kept himself unspotted from the errors of his time: a merit which posterity is apt to underrate; for nothing seems more stolid than a past delusion; and we forget that delusions, destined also to be past, are now present with ourselves, about us and within us, which, were the task so easy, it is pity that we do not forthwith convict and cast away. Musäus had a quick vigorous intellect, a keen eye for the common forms of the beautiful, a fancy ever prompt with allusions, and an overflowing store of sprightly and benignant humour. These natural gifts he

had not neglected to cultivate by study both of books and things; his reading distinguishes him even in Germany; nor does he bear it about him like an ostentatious burden, but in the shape of spiritual strength and plenty derived from it. As an author, his beauties and defects are numerous and easily discerned. His style sparkles with metaphors, sometimes just and beautiful, often new and surprising; but it is laborious, unnatural, and diffuse. Of his humour, his distinguishing gift, it may be remarked, that it seems copious rather than fine, and originates rather in the understanding than in the character: his heart is not delicate, or his affections tender; but he loves the ludicrous with true passion; and seeing keenly, if he feels obtusely, he can choose with sufficient skill the point of view from which his object shall appear distorted, as he requires it. This is the humour of a Swift or a Voltaire, but not of a Cervantes, or even of a Sterne in his best passages; it may produce a *Zadig* or a *Battle of the Books*; but not a *Don Quixote* or a *Corporal Trim.* Musäus is, in fact, no poet; he can see, and describe with rich graces what he sees; but he is nothing, or very little, of a Maker. His imagination is not powerless: it is like a bird of feeble wing, which can fly from tree to tree; but never soars for a moment into the æther of Poetry, to bathe in its serene splendour, with the region of the Actual lying far below, and brightened into beauty by radiance not its own. He is a man of fine and varied talent, but scarcely of any genius.

These characteristics are apparent enough in his Popular Tales; they may be traced even in the few specimens of that work, by which he is now introduced to the English reader. As has been already stated, his *Volksmährchen* exhibit himself much better than his subject. He is not admitted by his critics to have seized the finest spirit of this species of fiction, or turned it to the account of which it is capable in other hands. Whatever was austere or earnest, still more, whatever bordered upon awe or horror, his riant fancy rejected

with aversion: the rigorous moral sometimes hid in these traditions, the grim lines of primeval feeling and imagination to be traced in them, had no charms for him. These ruins of the remote time he has not attempted to complete into a perfect edifice, according to the first simple plan; he has rather pargetted them anew, and decorated them with the most modern ornaments and furniture; and he introduces his guests, with a roguish smile at the strange antic contrast they are to perceive between the movables and the apartment. Sometimes he rises into a flight of simple eloquence, and for a sentence or two seems really beautiful and affecting; but the knave is always laughing in his sleeve at our credulity, and returns with double relish to riot at will in his favourite domain.

Of the three Tales here offered to the reader, nothing need be said in explanation: for their whole significance, with all their beauties and blemishes, lies very near the surface. I have selected them, as specimens at once of his manner and his materials; in the hope, that, conveying some impression of a gifted and favourite writer, they may furnish a little entertainment both to the lovers of intellectual novelty and of innocent amusement. To neither can I promise very much: Musäus is a man of sterling powers, but no literary monster; and his Tales, though smooth and glittering, are cold; they have beauty, yet it is the beauty not of living forms, but of well-proportioned statues. Meanwhile, I have given him as I found him, endeavouring to copy faithfully; changing nothing, whether I might think it good or bad, that my skill enabled me to keep unchanged. With all drawbacks, I anticipate some favour for him: but his case admits no pleading; being clear by its own light, it must stand or fall by a first judgment, and without the help of advocates.

DUMB LOVE

THERE was once a wealthy merchant, Melchior of Bremen by name, who used to stroke his beard with a contemptuous grin, when he heard the Rich Man in the Gospel preached of, whom, in comparison, he reckoned little better than a petty shopkeeper. Melchior had money in such plenty, that he floored his dining-room all over with a coat of solid dollars. In those frugal times, as in our own, a certain luxury prevailed among the rich; only then it had a more substantial shape than now. But though this pomp of Melchior's was sharply censured by his fellow-citizens and consorts, it was, in truth, directed more to trading speculation than to mere vain-glory. The cunning Bremer easily observed, that those who grudged and blamed this seeming vanity, would but diffuse the reputation of his wealth, and so increase his credit. He gained his purpose to the full; the sleeping capital of old dollars, so judiciously set up to public inspection in the parlour, brought interest a hundredfold, by the silent surety which it offered for his bargains in every market; yet, at last, it became a rock on which the welfare of his family made shipwreck.

Melchior of Bremen died of a surfeit at a city-feast, without having time to set his house in order; and left all his goods and chattels to an only son, in the bloom of life, and just arrived at the years when the laws allowed him to take possession of his inheritance. Franz Melcherson was a brilliant youth, endued by nature with the best capacities. His

exterior was gracefully formed, yet firm and sinewy withal; his temper was cheery and jovial, as if hung-beef and old French wine had joined to influence his formation. On his cheeks bloomed health; and from his brown eyes looked mirthfulness and love of joy. He was like a marrowy plant, which needs but water and the poorest ground to make it grow to strength; but which, in too fat a soil, will shoot into luxuriant overgrowth, without fruit or usefulness. The father's heritage, as often happens, proved the ruin of the son. Scarce had he felt the joy of being sole possessor and disposer of a large fortune, when he set about endeavouring to get rid of it as of a galling burden; began to play the Rich Man in the Gospel to the very letter; went clothed in fine apparel, and fared sumptuously every day. No feast at the bishop's court could be compared for pomp and superfluity with his; and never while the town of Bremen shall endure, will such another public dinner be consumed, as it yearly got from him; for to every burgher of the place he gave a Krusel-soup and a jug of Spanish wine. For this, all people cried: Long life to him! and Franz became the hero of the day.

In this unceasing whirl of joviality, no thought was cast upon the Balancing of Entries, which, in those days, was the merchant's vade-mecum, though in our times it is going out of fashion, and for want of it the tongue of the commercial beam too frequently declines with a magnetic virtue from the vertical position. Some years passed on without the joyful Franz's noticing a diminution in his incomes; for at his father's death every chest and coffer had been full. The voracious host of table-friends, the airy company of jesters, gamesters, parasites, and all who had their living by the prodigal son, took special care to keep reflection at a distance from him; they hurried him from one enjoyment to another; kept him constantly in play, lest in some sober moment Reason might awake, and snatch him from their plundering claws.

But at last their well of happiness went suddenly dry; old Melchior's casks of gold were now run off even to the lees. One day, Franz ordered payment of a large account; his cash-keeper was not in a state to execute the precept, and returned it with a protest. This counter-incident flashed keenly through the soul of Franz; yet he felt nothing else but anger and vexation at his servant, to whose unaccountable perversity, by no means to his own ill husbandry, he charged the present disorder in his finances. Nor did he give himself the trouble to investigate the real condition of the business; but after flying to the common Fool's-litany, and thundering out some scores of curses, he transmitted to his shoulder-shrugging steward the laconic order: Find means.

Bill-brokers, usurers and money-changers now came into play. For high interest, fresh sums were poured into the empty coffers; the silver flooring of the dining-room was then more potent in the eyes of creditors, than in these times of ours the promissory obligation of the Congress of America, with the whole thirteen United States to back it. This palliative succeeded for a season; but, underhand, the rumour spread about the town, that the silver flooring had been privily removed, and a stone one substituted in its stead. The matter was immediately, by application of the lenders, legally inquired into, and discovered to be actually so. Now, it could not be denied, that a marble-floor, worked into nice mosaic, looked much better in a parlour, than a sheet of dirty, tarnished dollars: the creditors, however, paid so little reverence to the proprietor's refinement of taste, that on the spot they, one and all, demanded payment of their several moneys; and as this was not complied with, they proceeded to procure an act of bankruptcy; and Melchior's house, with its appurtenances, offices, gardens, parks and furniture, were sold by public auction, and their late owner, who in this extremity had screened himself from jail by some chicanery of law, judicially ejected.

It was now too late to moralise on his absurdities, since

philosophical reflections could not alter what was done, and the most wholesome resolutions would not bring him back his money. According to the principles of this our cultivated century, the hero at this juncture ought to have retired with dignity from the stage, or in some way terminated his existence; to have entered on his travels into foreign parts, or opened his carotid artery; since in his native town he could live no longer as a man of honour. Franz neither did the one nor the other. The *qu'en-dira-t-on*, which French morality employs as bit and curb for thoughtlessness and folly, had never once occurred to the unbridled squanderer in the days of his profusion, and his sensibility was still too dull to feel so keenly the disgrace of his capricious wastefulness. He was like a toper, who has been in drink, and on awakening out of his carousal, cannot rightly understand how matters are or have been with him. He lived according to the manner of unprospering spendthrifts; repented not, lamented not. By good fortune, he had picked some relics from the wreck; a few small heirlooms of the family; and these secured him for a time from absolute starvation.

He engaged a lodging in a remote alley, into which the sun never shone throughout the year, except for a few days about the solstice, when it peeped for a short while over the high roofs. Here he found the little that his now much-contracted wants required. The frugal kitchen of his landlord screened him from hunger, the stove from cold, the roof from rain, the four walls from wind; only from the pains of tedium he could devise no refuge or resource. The light rabble of parasites had fled away with his prosperity; and of his former friends there was now no one that knew him. Reading had not yet become a necessary of life; people did not yet understand the art of killing time by means of those amusing shapes of fancy which are wont to lodge in empty heads. There were yet no sentimental, pedagogic, psychologic, popular, simple, comic, or moral tales; no novels of domestic life, no cloister-stories, no romances of the middle

ages; and of the innumerable generation of our Henrys, and Adelaides, and Cliffords, and Emmas, no one had as yet lifted up its mantua-maker voice, to weary out the patience of a lazy and discerning public. In those days, knights were still diligently pricking round the tilt-yard; Dietrich of Bern, Hildebrand, Seyfried with the Horns, Rennewart the Strong, were following their snake and dragon hunt, and killing giants and dwarfs of twelve men's strength. The venerable epos, *Theuerdank*, was the loftiest ideal of German art and skill, the latest product of our native wit, but only for the cultivated minds, the poets and thinkers of the age. Franz belonged to none of those classes, and had therefore nothing to employ himself upon, except that he tuned his lute, and sometimes twanged a little on it; then, by way of variation, took to looking from the window, and instituted observations on the weather; out of which, indeed, there came no inference a whit more edifying than from all the labours of the most rheumatic meteorologist of this present age. Meanwhile his turn for observation ere long found another sort of nourishment, by which the vacant space in his head and heart was at once filled.

In the narrow lane right opposite his window dwelt an honest matron, who, in hope of better times, was earning a painful living by the long threads, which, assisted by a marvellously fair daughter, she winded daily from her spindle. Day after day the couple spun a length of yarn, with which the whole town of Bremen, with its walls and trenches, and all its suburbs, might have been begirt. These two spinners had not been born for the wheel; they were of good descent, and had lived of old in pleasant affluence. The fair Meta's father had once had a ship of his own on the sea, and, freighting it himself, had yearly sailed to Antwerp; but a heavy storm had sunk the vessel, "with man and mouse," and a rich cargo, into the abysses of the ocean, before Meta had passed the years of her childhood. The mother, a staid and reasonable woman, bore the loss of her husband and all her fortune

with a wise composure; in her need she refused, out of noble pride, all help from the charitable sympathy of her relations and friends; considering it as shameful alms, so long as she believed, that in her own activity she might find a living by the labour of her hands. She gave up her large house, and all her costly furniture, to the rigorous creditors of her ill-fated husband, hired a little dwelling in the lane, and span from early morning till late night, though the trade went sore against her, and she often wetted the thread with her tears. Yet by this diligence she reached her object, of depending upon no one, and owing no mortal any obligation. By and by she trained her growing daughter to the same employment; and lived so thriftily, that she laid-by a trifle of her gainings, and turned it to account by carrying on a little trade in flax.

She, however, nowise purposed to conclude her life in these poor circumstances; on the contrary, the honest dame kept up her heart with happy prospects into the future, and hoped that she should once more attain a prosperous situation, and in the autumn of her life enjoy her woman's-summer. Nor were these hopes grounded altogether upon empty dreams of fancy, but upon a rational and calculated expectation. She saw her daughter budding up like a spring rose, no less virtuous and modest than she was fair; and with such endowments of art and spirit, that the mother felt delight and comfort in her, and spared the morsel from her own lips, that nothing might be wanting in an education suitable to her capacities. For she thought, that if a maiden could come up to the sketch which Solomon, the wise friend of woman, has left of the ideal of a perfect wife, it could not fail that a pearl of such price would be sought after, and bidden for, to ornament some good man's house; for beauty combined with virtue, in the days of Mother Brigitta, were as important in the eyes of wooers, as, in our days, birth combined with fortune. Besides, the number of suitors was in those times greater; it was then believed that the wife was the most

essential, not, as in our refined economical theory, the most superfluous item in the household. The fair Meta, it is true, bloomed only like a precious rare flower in the greenhouse, not under the gay, free sky; she lived in maternal oversight and keeping, sequestered and still; was seen in no walk, in no company; and scarcely once in the year passed through the gate of her native town; all which seemed utterly to contradict her mother's principle. The old Lady E * * of Memel understood it otherwise, in her time. She sent the itinerant Sophia, it is clear as day, from Memel into Saxony, simply on a marriage speculation, and attained her purpose fully. How many hearts did the wandering nymph set on fire, how many suitors courted her! Had she stayed at home, as a domestic modest maiden, she might have bloomed away in the remoteness of her virgin cell, without even making a conquest of Kubbuz the schoolmaster. Other times, other manners. Daughters with us are a sleeping capital, which must be put in circulation if it is to yield any interest; of old, they were kept like thrifty savings, under lock and key; yet the bankers still knew where the treasure lay concealed, and how it might be come at. Mother Brigitta steered towards some prosperous son-in-law, who might lead her back from the Babylonian captivity of the narrow lane into the land of superfluity, flowing with milk and honey; and trusted firmly, that in the urn of Fate, her daughter's lot would not be coupled with a blank.

One day, while neighbour Franz was looking from the window, making observations on the weather, he perceived the charming Meta coming with her mother from church, whither she went daily, to attend mass. In the times of his abundance, the unstable voluptuary had been blind to the fairer half of the species; the finer feelings were still slumbering in his breast; and all his senses had been overclouded by the ceaseless tumult of debauchery. But now the stormy waves of extravagance had subsided; and in this deep calm, the smallest breath of air sufficed to curl the mirror surface of his

soul. He was enchanted by the aspect of this, the loveliest female figure that had ever flitted past him. He abandoned from that hour the barren study of the winds and clouds, and now instituted quite another set of Observations for the furtherance of Moral Science, and one which afforded to himself much finer occupation. He soon extracted from his landlord intelligence of this fair neighbour, and learned most part of what we know already.

Now rose on him the first repentant thought for his heedless squandering; there awoke a secret good-will in his heart to this new acquaintance; and for her sake he wished that his paternal inheritance were his own again, that the lovely Meta might be fitly dowered with it. His garret in the narrow lane was now so dear to him, that he would not have exchanged it with the Schudding itself.[1] Throughout the day he stirred not from the window, watching for an opportunity of glancing at the dear maiden; and when she chanced to show herself, he felt more rapture in his soul than did Horrox in his Liverpool Observatory, when he saw, for the first time, Venus passing over the disk of the Sun.

Unhappily the watchful mother instituted counter-observations, and ere long discovered what the lounger on the other side was driving at; and as Franz, in the capacity of spend-thrift, already stood in very bad esteem with her, this daily gazing angered her so much, that she shrouded her lattice as with a cloud, and drew the curtains close together. Meta had the strictest orders not again to appear at the window; and when her mother went with her to mass, she drew a rain-cap over her face, disguised her like a favourite of the Grand Signior, and hurried till she turned the corner with her, and escaped the eyes of the lier-in-wait.

Of Franz, it was not held that penetration was his master faculty; but Love awakens all the talents of the mind. He observed, that by his imprudent spying, he had betrayed him-

[1] One of the largest buildings in Bremen, where the meetings of the merchants are usually held.

self; and he thenceforth retired from the window, with the resolution not again to look out at it, though the *Venerabile* itself were carried by. On the other hand, he meditated some invention for proceeding with his observations in a private manner; and without great labour, his combining spirit mastered it.

He hired the largest looking-glass that he could find, and hung it up in his room, with such an elevation and direction, that he could distinctly see whatever passed in the dwelling of his neighbours. Here, as for several days the watcher did not come to light, the screens by degrees went asunder; and the broad mirror now and then could catch the form of the noble maid, and, to the great refreshment of the virtuoso, cast it truly back. The more deeply love took root in his heart,[1] the more widely did his wishes extend. It now struck him that he ought to lay his passion open to the fair Meta, and investigate the corresponding state of her opinions. The commonest and readiest way which lovers, under such a constellation of their wishes, strike into, was in his position inaccessible. In those modest ages, it was always difficult for Paladins in love to introduce themselves to daughters of the family; toilette calls were not in fashion; trustful interviews *tête-à-tête* were punished by the loss of reputation to the female sharer; promenades, esplanades, masquerades, pic-nics, goutés, soupés, and other inventions of modern wit for forwarding sweet courtship, had not then been hit upon; yet, notwithstanding, all things went their course, much as they do with us. Gossipings, weddings, lyke-wakes, were, especially in our Imperial Cities, privileged vehicles for carrying on soft secrets, and expediting marriage contracts; hence the old proverb, *One wedding makes a score.* But a poor runagate no man desired to number among his baptismal relatives; to no nuptial dinner, to no wakesupper, was he bidden. The by-way of negotiating, with the woman, with the young maid, or any other serviceable spirit of a go-between, was here

[1] Ἀπὸ τοῦ ὁρᾶν ἔρχεται τὸ ἐρᾶν.

locked up. Mother Brigitta had neither maid nor woman; the flax and yarn trade passed through no hands but her own; and she abode by her daughter as closely as her shadow.

In these circumstances, it was clearly impossible for neighbour Franz to disclose his heart to the fair Meta, either verbally or in writing. Ere long, however, he invented an idiom, which appeared expressly calculated for the utterance of the passions. It is true, the honour of the first invention is not his. Many ages ago, the sentimental Celadons of Italy and Spain had taught melting harmonies, in serenades beneath the balconies of their dames, to speak the language of the heart; and it is said that this melodious pathos had especial virtue in love-matters; and, by the confession of the ladies, was more heart-affecting and subduing, than of yore the oratory of the reverend Chrysostom, or the pleadings of Demosthenes and Tully. But of all this the simple Bremer had not heard a syllable; and consequently the invention of expressing his emotions in symphonious notes, and trilling them to his beloved Meta, was entirely his own.

In an hour of sentiment, he took his lute: he did not now tune it merely to accompany his voice, but drew harmonious melodies from its strings; and Love, in less than a month, had changed the musical scraper to a new Amphion. His first efforts did not seem to have been noticed; but soon the population of the lane were all ear, every time the dilettante struck a note. Mothers hushed their children, fathers drove the noisy urchins from the doors, and the performer had the satisfaction to observe that Meta herself, with her alabaster hand, would sometimes open the window as he began to prelude. If he succeeded in enticing her to lend an ear, his voluntaries whirled along in gay *allegro*, or skipped away in mirthful jigs; but if the turning of the spindle, or her thrifty mother, kept her back, a heavy-laden *andante* rolled over the bridge of the sighing lute, and expressed, in languishing modulations, the feeling of sadness which love-pain poured over his soul.

Meta was no dull scholar; she soon learned to interpret this expressive speech. She made various experiments to try whether she had rightly understood it, and found that she could govern at her will the dilettante humours of the unseen lute-twanger; for your silent modest maidens, it is well known, have a much sharper eye than those giddy flighty girls, who hurry with the levity of butterflies from one object to another, and take proper heed of none. She felt her female vanity a little flattered; and it pleased her that she had it in her power, by a secret magic, to direct the neighbouring lute, and tune it now to the note of joy, now to the whimpering moan of grief. Mother Brigitta, on the other hand, had her head so constantly employed with her traffic on the small scale, that she minded none of these things; and the sly little daughter took especial care to keep her in the dark respecting the discovery; and, instigated either by some touch of kindness for her cooing neighbour, or perhaps by vanity, that she might show her hermeneutic penetration, meditated on the means of making some symbolical response to these harmonious apostrophes to her heart. She expressed a wish to have flower-pots on the outside of the window; and to grant her this innocent amusement was a light thing for the mother, who no longer feared the coney-catching neighbour, now that she no longer saw him with her eyes.

Henceforth Meta had a frequent call to tend her flowers, to water them, to bind them up, and guard them from approaching storms, and watch their growth and flourishing. With inexpressible delight the happy Franz explained this hieroglyphic altogether in his favour; and the speaking lute did not fail to modulate his glad emotions, through the alley, into the heedful ear of the fair friend of flowers. This, in her tender virgin heart, worked wonders. She began to be secretly vexed, when Mother Brigitta, in her wise table-talk, in which at times she spent an hour chatting with her daughter, brought their melodious neighbour to her bar, and called him a losel and a sluggard, or compared him with

the Prodigal in the Gospel. She always took his part; threw the blame of his ruin on the sorrowful temptations he had met with; and accused him of nothing worse than not having fitly weighed the golden proverb, *A penny saved is a penny got.* Yet she defended him with cunning prudence; so that it rather seemed as if she wished to help the conversation, than took any interest in the thing itself.

While Mother Brigitta within her four walls was inveighing against the luckless spendthrift, he on his side entertained the kindest feelings towards her; and was considering diligently how he might, according to his means, improve her straitened circumstances, and divide with her the little that remained to him, and so that she might never notice that a portion of his property had passed over into hers. This pious outlay, in good truth, was specially intended not for the mother, but the daughter. Underhand he had come to know, that the fair Meta had a hankering for a new gown, which her mother had excused herself from buying, under pretext of hard times. Yet he judged quite accurately, that a present of a piece of stuff, from an unknown hand, would scarcely be received, or cut into a dress for Meta; and that he should spoil all, if he stept forth and avowed himself the author of the benefaction. Chance afforded him an opportunity to realise this purpose in the way he wished.

Mother Brigitta was complaining to a neighbour, that flax was very dull; that it cost her more to purchase than the buyers of it would repay; and that hence this branch of industry was nothing better, for the present, than a withered bough. Eaves-dropper Franz did not need a second telling; he ran directly to the goldsmith, sold his mother's ear-rings, bought some stones of flax, and, by means of a negotiatress, whom he gained, had it offered to the mother for a cheap price. The bargain was concluded; and it yielded so richly, that on All-Saints' day the fair Meta sparkled in a fine new gown. In this decoration, she had such a splendour in her watchful neighbour's eyes, that he would have overlooked the

Eleven Thousand Virgins, all and sundry, had it been permitted him to choose a heart's-mate from among them, and fixed upon the charming Meta.

But just as he was triumphing in the result of his innocent deceit, the secret was betrayed. Mother Brigitta had resolved to do the flax-retailer, who had brought her that rich gain, a kindness in her turn; and was treating her with a well-sugared rice-pap, and a quarter-stoop of Spanish sack. This dainty set in motion not only the toothless jaw, but also the garrulous tongue of the crone: she engaged to continue the flax-brokerage, should her consigner feel inclined, as from good grounds she guessed he would. One word produced another; Mother Eve's two daughters searched, with the curiosity peculiar to their sex, till at length the brittle seal of female secrecy gave way. Meta grew pale with affright at the discovery, which would have charmed her, had her mother not partaken of it. But she knew her strict ideas of morals and decorum; and these gave her doubts about the preservation of her gown. The serious dame herself was no less struck at the tidings, and wished, on her side too, that she alone had got intelligence of the specific nature of her flax-trade; for she dreaded that this neighbourly munificence might make an impression on her daughter's heart, which would derange her whole calculations. She resolved, therefore, to root out the still tender germ of this weed, in the very act, from the maiden heart. The gown, in spite of all the tears and prayers of its lovely owner, was first hypothecated, and next day transmitted to the huckster's shop; the money raised from it, with the other profits of the flax speculation, accurately reckoned up, were packed together, and under the name of an old debt, returned to 'Mr. Franz Melcherson, in Bremen,' by help of the Hamburg post. The receiver, nothing doubting, took the little lot of money as an unexpected blessing; wished that all his father's debtors would clear off their old scores as conscientiously as this honest unknown person; and had not the smallest notion of the real position

of affairs. The talking brokeress, of course, was far from giving him a true disclosure of her blabbing; she merely told him that Mother Brigitta had given up her flax-trade.

Meanwhile, the mirror taught him, that the aspects over the way had altered greatly in a single night. The flower-pots were entirely vanished; and the cloudy veil again obscured the friendly horizon of the opposite window. Meta was seldom visible; and if for a moment, like the silver moon, from among her clouds in a stormy night, she did appear, her countenance was troubled, the fire of her eyes was extinguished, and it seemed to him, that, at times, with her finger, she pressed away a pearly tear. This seized him sharply by the heart; and his lute resounded melancholy sympathy in soft Lydian mood. He grieved, and meditated to discover why his love was sad; but all his thinking and imagining were vain. After some days were past, he noticed, to his consternation, that his dearest piece of furniture, the large mirror, had become entirely useless. He set himself one bright morning in his usual nook, and observed that the clouds over the way had, like natural fog, entirely dispersed; a sign which he at first imputed to a general washing; but ere long he saw that, in the chamber, all was waste and empty; his pleasing neighbours had in silence withdrawn the night before, and broken up their quarters.

He might now, once more, with the greatest leisure and convenience, enjoy the free prospect from his window, without fear of being troublesome to any; but for him it was a dead loss to miss the kind countenance of his Platonic love. Mute and stupefied, he stood, as of old his fellow-craftsman, the harmonious Orpheus, when the dear shadow of his Eurydice again vanished down to Orcus; and if the bedlam humour of those "noble minds," who raved among us through the bygone lustre, but have now like drones disappeared with the earliest frost, had then been ripened to existence, this calm of his would certainly have passed into a sudden hurricane. The least he could have done, would have been

to pull his hair, to trundle himself about upon the ground, or run his head against the wall, and break his stove and window. All this he omitted; from the very simple cause, that true love never makes men fools, but rather is the universal remedy for healing sick minds of their foolishness, for laying gentle fetters on extravagance, and guiding youthful giddiness from the broad way of ruin to the narrow path of reason; for the rake whom love will not recover is lost irrecoverably.

When once his spirit had assembled its scattered powers, he set on foot a number of instructive meditations on the unexpected phenomenon, but too visible in the adjacent horizon. He readily conceived that he was the lever which had effected the removal of the wandering colony: his money-letter, the abrupt conclusion of the flax-trade, and the emigration which had followed thereupon, were like reciprocal exponents to each other, and explained the whole to him. He perceived that Mother Brigitta had got round his secrets, and saw from every circumstance that he was not her hero; a discovery which yielded him but little satisfaction. The symbolic responses of the fair Meta, with her flower-pots, to his musical proposals of love; her trouble, and the tear which he had noticed in her bright eyes shortly before her departure from the lane, again animated his hopes, and kept him in good heart. His first employment was to go in quest, and try to learn where Mother Brigitta had pitched her residence, in order to maintain, by some means or other, his secret understanding with the daughter. It cost him little toil to find her abode; yet he was too modest to shift his own lodging to her neighbourhood; but satisfied himself with spying out the church where she now attended mass, that he might treat himself once each day with a glance of his beloved. He never failed to meet her as she returned, now here, now there, in some shop or door which she was passing, and salute her kindly; an equivalent for a *billet-doux*, and productive of the same effect.

Had not Meta been brought up in a style too nunlike, and guarded by her rigid mother as a treasure, from the eyes of thieves, there is little doubt that neighbour Franz, with his secret wooing, would have made no great impression on her heart. But she was at the critical age when Mother Nature and Mother Brigitta, with their wise nurture, were perpetually coming into collision. The former taught her, by a secret instinct, the existence of emotions, for which she had no name, and eulogised them as the panacea of life; the latter warned her to beware of the surprisals of a passion, which she would not designate by its true title, but which, as she maintained, was more pernicious and destructive to young maidens than the small-pox itself. The former, in the spring of life, as beseemed the season, enlivened her heart with a genial warmth; the latter wished that it should always be as cold and frosty as an ice-house. These conflicting pedagogic systems of the two good mothers gave the tractable heart of the daughter the direction of a ship which is steered against the wind, and follows neither the wind nor the helm, but a course between the two. She maintained the modesty and virtue which her education, from her youth upwards, had impressed upon her; but her heart continued open to all tender feelings. And as neighbour Franz was the first youth who had awakened these slumbering emotions, she took a certain pleasure in him, which she scarcely owned to herself, but which any less unexperienced maiden would have recognised as love. It was for this that her departure from the narrow lane had gone so near her heart; for this that the little tear had trickled from her beautiful eyes; for this that, when the watchful Franz saluted her as she came from church, she thanked him so kindly, and grew scarlet to the ears. The lovers had in truth never spoken any word to one another; but he understood her, and she him, so perfectly, that in the most secret interview they could not have explained themselves more clearly; and both contracting parties swore in their silent hearts, each for

himself, under the seal of secrecy, the oath of faithfulness to the other.

In the quarter, where Mother Brigitta had now settled, there were likewise neighbours, and among these likewise girl-spiers, whom the beauty of the charming Meta had not escaped. Right opposite their dwelling lived a wealthy Brewer, whom the wags of the part, as he was strong in means, had named the Hop-King. He was a young stout widower, whose mourning year was just concluding, so that now he was entitled, without offending the precepts of decorum, to look about him elsewhere for a new helpmate to his household. Shortly after the departure of his whilom wife, he had in secret entered into an engagement with his Patron Saint, St. Christopher, to offer him a wax-taper as long as a hop-pole, and as thick as a mashing-beam, if he would vouchsafe in this second choice to prosper the desire of his heart. Scarcely had he seen the dainty Meta, when he dreamed that St. Christopher looked in upon him, through the window of his bedroom in the second story,[1] and demanded payment of his debt. To the quick widower this seemed a heavenly call to cast out the net without delay. Early in the morning he sent for the brokers of the town, and commissioned them to buy bleached wax; then decked himself like a Syndic, and set forth to expedite his marriage speculation. He had no musical talents, and in the secret symbolic language of love he was no better than a blockhead; but he had a rich brewery, a solid mortgage on the city-revenues, a ship on the Weser, and a farm without the gates. With such recommendations he might have reckoned on a prosperous issue to his courtship, independently of all assistance from St. Kit, especially as his bride was without dowry.

[1] St. Christopher never appears to his favourites, like the other Saints, in a solitary room, encircled with a glory: there is no room high enough to admit him; thus the celestial Son of Anak is obliged to transact all business with his wards outside the window.

According to old use and wont, he went directly to the master hand, and disclosed to the mother, in a kind neighbourly way, his christian intentions towards her virtuous and honourable daughter. No angel's visit could have charmed the good lady more than these glad tidings. She now saw ripening before her the fruit of her prudent scheme, and the fulfilment of her hope again to emerge from her present poverty into her former abundance; she blessed the good thought of moving from the crooked alley, and in the first ebullition of her joy, as a thousand gay ideas were ranking themselves up within her soul, she also thought of neighbour Franz, who had given occasion to it. Though Franz was not exactly her bosom-youth, she silently resolved to gladden him, as the accidental instrument of her rising star, with some secret gift or other, and by this means likewise recompense his well-intended flax-dealing.

In the maternal heart the marriage-articles were as good as signed; but decorum did not permit these rash proceedings in a matter of such moment. She therefore let the motion lie *ad referendum*, to be considered by her daughter and herself; and appointed a term of eight days, after which "she hoped she should have it in her power to give the much-respected suitor a reply that would satisfy him"; all which, as the common manner of proceeding, he took in good part, and with his usual civilities withdrew. No sooner had he turned his back, than spinning-wheel and reel, swingling-stake and hatchel, without regard being paid to their faithful services, and without accusation being lodged against them, were consigned, like some luckless Parliament of Paris, to disgrace, and dismissed as useless implements into the lumber-room. On returning from mass, Meta was astonished at the sudden catastrophe which had occurred in the apartment; it was all decked out as on one of the three high Festivals of the year. She could not understand how her thrifty mother, on a workday, had so neglectfully put her active hand in her bosom; but before she had time to question the kindly-

smiling dame concerning this reform in household affairs, she was favoured by the latter with an explanation of the riddle. Persuasion rested on Brigitta's tongue; and there flowed from her lips a stream of female eloquence, depicting the offered happiness in the liveliest hues which her imagination could lay on. She expected from the chaste Meta the blush of soft virgin bashfulness, which announces the novitiate in love; and then a full resignation of herself to the maternal will. For of old, in proposals of marriage, daughters were situated as our princesses are still; they were not asked about their inclination, and had no voice in the selection of their legal helpmate, save the Yes before the altar.

But Mother Brigitta was in this point widely mistaken; the fair Meta did not at the unexpected announcement grow red as a rose, but pale as ashes. An hysterical giddiness swam over her brain, and she sank fainting in her mother's arms. When her senses were recalled by the sprinkling of cold water, and she had in some degree recovered strength, her eyes overflowed with tears, as if a heavy misfortune had befallen her. From all these symptoms, the sagacious mother easily perceived that the marriage-trade was not to her taste; at which she wondered not a little, sparing neither prayers nor admonitions to her daughter to secure her happiness by this good match, not flout it from her by caprice and contradiction. But Meta could not be persuaded that her happiness depended on a match to which her heart gave no assent. The debates between the mother and the daughter lasted several days, from early morning to late night; the term for decision was approaching; the sacred taper for St. Christopher, which Og King of Bashan need not have disdained had it been lit for him as a marriage-torch at his espousals, stood in readiness, all beautifully painted with living flowers like a many-coloured light, though the Saint had all the while been so inactive in his client's cause, that the fair Meta's heart was still bolted and barred against him fast as ever.

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Meanwhile she had bleared her eyes with weeping, and the maternal rhetoric had worked so powerfully, that, like a flower in the sultry heat, she was drooping together, and visibly fading away. Hidden grief was gnawing at her heart; she had prescribed herself a rigorous fast, and for three days no morsel had she eaten, and with no drop of water moistened her parched lips. By night sleep never visited her eyes; and with all this she grew sick to death, and began to talk about extreme unction. As the tender mother saw the pillar of her hope wavering, and bethought herself that she might lose both capital and interest at once, she found, on accurate consideration, that it would be more advisable to let the latter vanish, than to miss them both; and with kindly indulgence plied into the daughter's will. It cost her much constraint, indeed, and many hard battles, to turn away so advantageous an offer; yet at last, according to established order in household governments, she yielded unconditionally to the inclination of her child, and remonstrated no more with her beloved patient on the subject. As the stout widower announced himself on the appointed day, in the full trust that his heavenly deputy had arranged it all according to his wish, he received, quite unexpectedly, a negative answer, which, however, was sweetened with such a deal of blandishment, that he swallowed it like wine-of-wormwood mixed with sugar. For the rest, he easily accommodated himself to his destiny; and discomposed himself no more about it, than if some bargain for a ton of malt had chanced to come to nothing. Nor, on the whole, had he any cause to sorrow without hope. His native town has never wanted amiable daughters, who come up to the Solomonic sketch, and are ready to make perfect spouses; besides, notwithstanding this unprospered courtship, he depended with firm confidence upon his Patron Saint; who in fact did him such substantial service elsewhere, that ere a month elapsed, he had planted with much pomp his devoted taper at the friendly shrine.

Mother Brigitta was now fain to recall the exiled spinning-

tackle from its lumber-room, and again set it in action. All once more went its usual course. Meta soon bloomed out anew, was active in business, and diligently went to mass; but the mother could not hide her secret grudging at the failure of her hopes, and the annihilation of her darling plan; she was splenetic, peevish, and dejected. Her ill-humour had especially the upper hand that day when neighbour Hop-King held his nuptials. As the wedding company proceeded to the church, with the town-band bedrumming and becymballing them in the van, she whimpered and sobbed as in the evil hour when the Job's news reached her, that the wild sea had devoured her husband, with ship and fortune. Meta looked at the bridal pomp with great equanimity; even the royal ornaments, the jewels in the myrtle-crown, and the nine strings of true pearls about the neck of the bride, made no impression on her peace of mind; a circumstance in some degree surprising, since a new Paris cap, or any other meteor in the gallery of Mode, will so frequently derange the contentment and domestic peace of an entire parish. Nothing but the heart-consuming sorrow of her mother discomposed her, and overclouded the gay look of her eyes; she strove by a thousand caresses and little attentions to work herself into favour; and she so far succeeded that the good lady grew a little more communicative.

In the evening, when the wedding-dance began, she said, "Ah, child! this merry dance it might have been thy part to lead off. What a pleasure, hadst thou recompensed thy mother's care and toil with this joy! But thou hast mocked thy happiness, and now I shall never see the day when I am to attend thee to the altar."—"Dear mother," answered Meta, "I confide in Heaven; and if it is written above that I am to be led to the altar, you will surely deck my garland: for when the right wooer comes, my heart will soon say Yes."—"Child, for girls without dowry there is no press of wooers; they are heavy ware to trade with. Nowadays the bachelors are mighty stingy; they court to be happy, not to make

happy. Besides, thy planet bodes thee no good; thou wert born in April. Let us see how it is written in the Calendar: 'A damsel born in this month is comely of countenance, slender of shape, but of changeful humour, has a liking to men. Should have an eye upon her maiden garland, and so a laughing wooer come, not miss her fortune.' Alas, it answers to a hair! The wooer has been here, comes not again: thou hast missed him."—"Ah, mother! let the planet say its pleasure, never mind it; my heart says to me that I should love and honour the man who asks me to be his wife: and if I do not find that man, or he do not seek me, I will live in good courage by the labour of my hands, and stand by you, and nurse you in your old age, as beseems a good daughter. But if the man of my heart do come, then bless my choice, that it may be well with your daughter on the Earth; and ask not whether he is noble, rich, or famous, but whether he is good and honest, whether he loves and is loved."—"Ah, daughter! Love keeps a sorry kitchen, and feeds one poorly, along with bread and salt."—"But yet Unity and Contentment delight to dwell with him, and these season bread and salt with the cheerful enjoyment of our days."

The pregnant subject of bread and salt continued to be sifted till the night was far spent, and the last fiddle in the wedding-dance was resting from its labours. The moderation of the prudent Meta, who, with youth and beauty on her side, pretended only to an altogether bounded happiness, after having turned away an advantageous offer, led the mother to conjecture that the plan of some such salt-trade might already have been sketched in the heart of the virgin. Nor did she fail to guess the trading-partner in the lane, of whom she never had believed that he would be the tree for rooting in the lovely Meta's heart. She had looked upon him only as a wild tendril, that stretches out towards every neighbouring twig, to clamber up by means of it. This discovery procured her little joy; but she gave no hint that she had made it. Only, in the spirit of her rigorous morality,

she compared a maiden who lets love, before the priestly benediction, nestle in her heart, to a worm-eaten apple, which is good for the eye, but no longer for the palate, and is laid upon a shelf and no more heeded, for the pernicious worm is eating its internal marrow, and cannot be dislodged. She now despaired of ever holding up her head again in Bremen; submitted to her fate, and bore in silence what she thought was now not to be altered.

Meanwhile the rumour of the proud Meta's having given the rich Hop-King the basket, spread over the town, and sounded even into Franz's garret in the alley. Franz was transported with joy to hear this tale confirmed; and the secret anxiety lest some wealthy rival might expel him from the dear maiden's heart tormented him no more. He was now certain of his object; and the riddle, which for every one continued an insoluble problem, had no mystery for him. Love had already changed a spendthrift into a dilettante; but this for a bride-seeker was the very smallest of recommendations, a gift which in those rude times was rewarded neither with such praise nor with such pudding, as it is in our luxurious century. The fine arts were not then the children of superfluity, but of want and necessity. No travelling professors were at that time known, save the Prague students, whose squeaking symphonies solicited a charitable coin at the doors of the rich. The beloved maiden's sacrifice was too great to be repaid by a serenade. And now the feeling of his youthful dissipation became a thorn in the soul of Franz. Many a touching monodrama did he begin with an O and an Ah, besighing his past madness: "Ah, Meta," said he to himself, "why did I not know thee sooner! Thou hadst been my guardian angel, thou hadst saved me from destruction. Could I live my lost years over again, and be what I was, the world were now Elysium for me, and for thee I would make it an Eden! Noble maiden, thou sacrificest thyself to a wretch, to a beggar, who has nothing in the world but a heart full of love, and despair

that he can offer thee no happiness such as thou deservest." Innumerable times, in the paroxysms of these pathetic humours, he struck his brow in fury, with the repentant exclamation: "O fool! O madman! thou art wise too late."

Love, however, did not leave its working incomplete. It had already brought about a wholesome fermentation in his spirit, a desire to put in use his powers and activity, to try if he might struggle up from his present nothingness: it now incited him to the attempt of executing these good purposes. Among many speculations he had entertained for the recruiting of his wrecked finances, the most rational and promising was this: To run over his father's ledgers, and there note down any small escheats which had been marked as lost, with a view of going through the land, and gleaning, if so were that a lock of wheat might still be gathered from these neglected ears. With the produce of this enterprise, he would then commence some little traffic, which his fancy soon extended over all the quarters of the world. Already, in his mind's eye, he had vessels on the sea, which were freighted with his property. He proceeded rapidly to execute his purpose; changed the last golden fragment of his heritage, his father's hour-egg,[1] into money, and bought with it a riding nag, which was to bear him as a Bremen merchant out into the wide world.

Yet the parting with his fair Meta went sore against his heart. "What will she think," said he to himself, "of this sudden disappearance, when thou shalt no more meet her in the church-way? Will she not regard thee as faithless, and banish thee from her heart?" This thought afflicted him exceedingly; and for a great while he could think of no expedient for explaining to her his intention. But at last inventive Love suggested the idea of signifying to her from the pulpit itself his absence and its purpose. With this view, in the church, which had already favoured the secret understanding of the lovers, he bought a Prayer "for a young

[1] The oldest watches, from the shape they had, were named hour-eggs.

Traveller, and the happy arrangement of his affairs"; which was to last, till he should come again and pay his groschen for the Thanksgiving.

At the last meeting, he had dressed himself as for the road; he passed quite near his sweetheart; saluted her expressively, and with less reserve than before; so that she blushed deeply; and Mother Brigitta found opportunity for various marginal notes, which indicated her displeasure at the boldness of this ill-bred fop, in attempting to get speech of her daughter, and with which she entertained the latter not in the most pleasant style the livelong day. From that morning Franz was no more seen in Bremen, and the finest pair of eyes within its circuit sought for him in vain. Meta often heard the Prayer read, but she did not heed it, for her heart was troubled because her lover had become invisible. This disappearance was inexplicable to her; she knew not what to think of it. After the lapse of some months, when time had a little softened her secret care, and she was suffering his absence with a calmer mind, it happened once, as the last appearance of her love was hovering upon her fancy, that this same Prayer struck her as a strange matter. She coupled one thing with another, she guessed the true connection of the business, and the meaning of that notice. And although church litanies and special prayers have not the reputation of extreme potency, and for the worthy souls that lean on them are but a supple staff, inasmuch as the fire of devotion in the Christian flock is wont to die out at the end of the sermon; yet in the pious Meta's case, the reading of the last Prayer was the very thing which fanned that fire into a flame; and she never neglected, with her whole heart, to recommend the young traveller to his guardian angel.

Under this invisible guidance, Franz was journeying towards Brabant, to call in some considerable sums that were due him at Antwerp. A journey from Bremen to Antwerp, in the time when road-blockades were still in fashion, and every landlord thought himself entitled to plunder any

traveller who had purchased no safe-conduct, and to leave him pining in the ward-room of his tower, was an undertaking of more peril and difficulty, than in our days would attend a journey from Bremen to Kamtschatka: for the *Land-fried* (or Act for suppressing Private Wars), which the Emperor Maximilian had proclaimed, was in force through the Empire, rather as a law than an observance. Nevertheless our solitary traveller succeeded in arriving at the goal of his pilgrimage, without encountering more than a single adventure.

Far in the wastes of Westphalia, he rode one sultry day till nightfall, without reaching any inn. Towards evening stormy clouds towered up at the horizon, and a heavy rain wetted him to the skin. To the fondling, who from his youth had been accustomed to all possible conveniences, this was a heavy matter, and he felt himself in great embarrassment how in this condition he should pass the night. To his comfort, when the tempest had moved away, he saw a light in the distance; and soon after, reached a mean peasant hovel, which afforded him but little consolation. The house was more like a cattle-stall than a human habitation; and the unfriendly landlord refused him fire and water, as if he had been an outlaw. For the man was just about to stretch himself upon the straw among his steers; and too tired to relight the fire on his hearth, for the sake of a stranger. Franz in his despondency uplifted a mournful *miserere*, and cursed the Westphalian steppes with strong maledictions: but the peasant took it all in good part; and blew out his light with great composure, troubling himself no farther about the stranger; for in the laws of hospitality he was altogether uninstructed. But as the wayfarer, standing at the door, would not cease to annoy him with his lamentations, he endeavoured in a civil way to get rid of him, consented to answer, and said: "Master, if you want good entertainment, and would treat yourself handsomely, you could not find what you are seeking here. But ride there to the left hand,

through the bushes; a little way behind, lies the Castle of the valiant Eberhard Bronkhorst, a knight who lodges every traveller, as a Hospitaller does the pilgrims from the Holy Sepulchre. He has just one maggot in his head, which sometimes twitches and vexes him; he lets no traveller depart from him unbasted. If you do not lose your way, though he may dust your jacket, you will like your cheer prodigiously."

To buy a mess of pottage, and a stoup of wine, by surrendering one's ribs to the bastinado, is in truth no job for every man, though your spungers and plate-lickers let themselves be tweaked and snubbed, and from rich artists willingly endure all kinds of tar-and-feathering, so their palates be but tickled for the service. Franz considered for a while, and was undetermined what to do; at last he resolved on fronting the adventure. "What is it to me," said he, "whether my back be broken here on miserable straw, or by the Ritter Bronkhorst? The friction will expel the fever which is coming on, and shake me tightly if I cannot dry my clothes." He put spurs to his nag, and soon arrived before a castle-gate of old Gothic architecture; knocked pretty plainly on the iron door, and an equally distinct "Who's there?" resounded from within. To the freezing passenger, the long entrance ceremonial of this door-keeper precognition was as inconvenient, as are similar delays to travellers who, at barriers and gates of towns, bewail or execrate the despotism of guards and tollmen. Nevertheless he must submit to use and wont, and patiently wait to see whether the philanthropist in the Castle was disposed that night for cudgelling a guest, or would choose rather to assign him a couch under the open canopy.

The possessor of this ancient tower had served, in his youth, as a stout soldier in the Emperor's army, under the bold Georg von Fronsberg, and led a troop of foot against the Venetians; had afterwards retired to repose, and was now living on his property; where, to expiate the sins of his

campaigns, he employed himself in doing good works; in feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, lodging pilgrims, and cudgelling his lodgers out of doors. For he was a rude wild son of war; and could not lay aside his martial tone, though he had lived for many years in silent peace. The traveller, who had now determined for good quarters to submit to the custom of the house, had not waited long till the bolts and locks began rattling within, and the creaking gate-leaves moved asunder, moaning in doleful notes, as if to warn or to deplore the entering stranger. Franz felt one cold shudder after the other running down his back, as he passed in; nevertheless he was handsomely received; some servants hastened to assist him in dismounting; speedily unbuckled his luggage, took his steed to the stable, and its rider to a large well-lighted chamber, where their master was in waiting.

The warlike aspect of this athletic gentleman,—who advanced to meet his guest, and shook him by the hand so heartily, that he was like to shout with pain, and bade him welcome with a Stentor's voice, as if the Stranger had been deaf, and seemed withal to be a person still in the vigour of life, full of fire and strength,—put the timorous wanderer into such a terror, that he could not hide his apprehensions, and began to tremble over all his body.

"What ails you, my young master," asked the Ritter, with a voice of thunder, "that you quiver like an aspen leaf, and look as pale as if Death had you by the throat?"

Franz plucked up a spirit; and considering that his shoulders had at all events the score to pay, his poltroonery passed into a species of audacity.

"Sir," replied he, "you perceive that the rain has soaked me, as if I had swum across the Weser. Let me have my clothes dried or changed; and get me, by way of luncheon, a well-spiced aleberry, to drive away the ague-fit that is quaking through my nerves; then I shall come to heart, in some degree."

"Good!" replied the Knight; "demand what you want; you are at home here."

Franz made himself be served like a bashaw; and having nothing else but currying to expect, he determined to deserve it; he bantered and bullied, in his most imperious style, the servants that were waiting on him; it comes all to one, thought he, in the long-run. "This waistcoat," said he, "would go round a tun; bring me one that fits a little better: this slipper burns like a coal against my corns; pitch it over the lists: this ruff is stiff as a plank, and throttles me like a halter; bring one that is easier, and is not plastered with starch."

At this Bremish frankness, the landlord, far from showing any anger, kept inciting his servants to go briskly through with their commands, and calling them a pack of blockheads, who were fit to serve no stranger. The table being furnished, the Ritter and his guest sat down to it, and both heartily enjoyed their aleberry. The Ritter asked: "Would you have aught farther, by way of supper?"

"Bring us what you have," said Franz, "that I may see how your kitchen is provided."

Immediately appeared the Cook, and placed upon the table a repast with which a duke might have been satisfied. Franz diligently fell-to, without waiting to be pressed. When he had satisfied himself: "Your kitchen," said he, "is not ill-furnished, I perceive; if your cellar corresponds to it, I shall almost praise your housekeeping."

Bronkhorst nodded to his Butler, who directly filled the cup of welcome with common table wine, tasted, and presented it to his master, and the latter cleared it at a draught to the health of his guest. Franz pledged him honestly, and Bronkhorst asked: "Now, fair sir, what say you to the wine?"

"I say," answered Franz, "that it is bad, if it is the best sort in your catacombs; and good, if it is your meanest number."

"You are a judge," replied the Ritter: "Here, Butler, bring us of the mother-cask."

The Butler put a stoup upon the table, as a sample, and Franz having tasted it, said, "Ay, this is genuine last year's growth; we will stick by this."

The Ritter made a vast pitcher of it be brought in; soon drank himself into hilarity and glee beside his guest; began to talk of his campaigns, how he had been encamped against the Venetians, had broken through their barricado, and butchered the Italian squadrons, like a flock of sheep. In this narrative he rose into such a warlike enthusiasm, that he hewed down bottles and glasses, brandishing the carving-knife like a lance, and in the fire of action came so near his messmate with it, that the latter was in fright for his nose and ears.

It grew late, but no sleep came into the eyes of the Ritter; he seemed to be in his proper element, when he got to speak of his Venetian campaigns. The vivacity of his narration increased with every cup he emptied; and Franz was afraid that this would prove the prologue to the melodrama, in which he himself was to play the most interesting part. To learn whether it was meant that he should lodge within the Castle, or without, he demanded a bumper by way of good-night. Now, he thought, his host would first force him to drink more wine, and if he refused, would, under pretext of a drinking quarrel, send him forth, according to the custom of the house, with the usual *viaticum*. Contrary to his expectation, the request was granted without remonstrance; the Ritter instantly cut asunder the thread of his narrative, and said: "Time will wait on no one; more of it tomorrow!"

"Pardon me, Herr Ritter," answered Franz, "tomorrow by sunrise I must over hill and dale; I am travelling a far journey to Brabant, and must not linger here. So let me take leave of you tonight, that my departure may not disturb you in the morning."

"Do your pleasure," said the Ritter; "but depart from this you shall not, till I am out of the feathers, to refresh you with a bit of bread, and a toothful of Dantzig, then attend you to the door, and dismiss you according to the fashion of the house."

Franz needed no interpretation of these words. Willingly as he would have excused his host this last civility, attendance to the door, the latter seemed determined to abate no whit of the established ritual. He ordered his servants to undress the stranger, and put him in the guest's-bed; where Franz, once settled on elastic swan's down, felt himself extremely snug, and enjoyed delicious rest; so that ere he fell asleep, he owned to himself that, for such royal treatment, a moderate bastinado was not too dear a price. Soon pleasant dreams came hovering round his fancy. He found his charming Meta in a rosy grove, where she was walking with her mother, plucking flowers. Instantly he hid himself behind a thick-leaved hedge, that the rigorous duenna might not see him. Again his imagination placed him in the alley, and by his looking-glass he saw the snow-white hand of the maiden busied with her flowers; soon he was sitting with her on the grass, and longing to declare his heartfelt love to her, and the bashful shepherd found no words to do it in. He would have dreamed till broad mid-day, had he not been roused by the sonorous voice and clanking spurs of the Ritter, who, with the earliest dawn, was holding a review of kitchen and cellar, ordering a sufficient breakfast to be readied, and placing every servant at his post, to be at hand when the guest should awake, to dress him, and wait upon him.

It cost the happy dreamer no small struggling to forsake his safe and hospitable bed. He rolled to this side and to that; but the pealing voice of the worshipful Knight came heavy on his heart; and dally as he might, the sour apple must at last be bit. So he rose from his down; and immediately a dozen hands were busy dressing him. The Ritter led him into the parlour, where a small well-furnished table

waited them; but now, when the hour of reckoning had arrived, the traveller's appetite was gone. The host endeavoured to encourage him. "Why do you not get to? Come, take somewhat for the raw foggy morning."

"Herr Ritter," answered Franz, "my stomach is still too full of your supper; but my pockets are empty; these I may fill for the hunger that is to come."

With this he began stoutly cramming, and stowed himself with the daintiest and best that was transportable, till all his pockets were bursting. Then, observing that his horse, well curried and equipt, was led past, he took a dram of Dantzig for good-b'ye, in the thought that this would be the watch-word for his host to catch him by the neck, and exercise his household privileges.

But, to his astonishment, the Ritter shook him kindly by the hand, as at his first entrance, wished him luck by the way, and the bolted door was thrown open. He loitered not in putting spurs to his nag; and, tip! tap! he was without the gate, and no hair of him harmed.

A heavy stone was lifted from his heart, as he found himself in safety, and saw that he had got away with a whole skin. He could not understand how the landlord had trusted him the shot, which, as he imagined, must have run pretty high on the chalk: and he embraced with warm love the hospitable man, whose club-law arm he had so much dreaded; and he felt a strong desire to search out, at the fountain-head, the reason or unreason of the ill report which had affrighted him. Accordingly he turned his horse, and cantered back. The Knight was still standing in the gate, and descanting with his servants, for the forwarding of the science of horse-flesh, on the breed, shape and character of the nag, and his hard pace: he supposed the stranger must have missed something in his travelling gear, and he already looked askance at his servants for such negligence.

"What is it, young master," cried he, "that makes you turn again, when you were for proceeding?"

"Ah! yet a word, valiant Knight," cried the traveller. "An ill report has gone abroad, that injures your name and breeding. It is said that you treat every stranger that calls upon you with your best; and then, when he leaves you, let him feel the weight of your strong fists. This story I have credited, and spared nothing to deserve my due from you. I thought within myself, His worship will abate me nothing; I will abate him as little. But now you let me go, without strife or peril; and that is what surprises me. Pray tell me, is there any shadow of foundation for the thing; or shall I call the foolish chatter lies next time I hear it?"

The Ritter answered: "Report has nowise told you lies; there is no saying that circulates among the people but contains in it some grain of truth. Let me tell you accurately how the matter stands. I lodge every stranger that comes beneath my roof, and divide my morsel with him, for the love of God. But I am a plain German man, of the old cut and fashion; speak as it lies about my heart, and require that my guest also should be hearty and confiding; should enjoy with me what I have, and tell frankly what he wants. Now, there is a sort of people that vex me with all manner of grimaces; that banter me with smirkings, and bows, and crouchings; put all their words to the torture; make a deal of talk without sense or salt; think they will cozen me with smooth speeches; behave at dinner as women at a christening. If I say, Help yourself! out of reverence, they pick you a fraction from the plate which I would not offer to my dog: if I say, Your health! they scarcely wet their lips from the full cup, as if they set God's gifts at naught. Now, when the sorry rabble carry things too far with me, and I cannot, for the soul of me, know what they would be at, I get into a rage at last, and use my household privilege; catch the noodle by the spall, thrash him sufficiently, and pack him out of doors. This is the use and wont with me, and I do so with every guest that plagues me with these freaks. But a man of your stamp is always welcome: you told me plump out in plain

German what you thought, as is the fashion with the Bremers. Call on me boldly again, if your road lead you hither. And so, God be with you."

Franz now moved on, with a joyful humour, towards Antwerp; and he wished that he might everywhere find such a reception as he had met from the Ritter Eberhard Bronkhorst. On approaching the ancient queen of the Flemish cities, the sail of his hope was swelled by a propitious breeze. Riches and superfluity met him in every street; and it seemed as if scarcity and want had been exiled from the busy town. In all probability, thought he, there must be many of my father's debtors who have risen again, and will gladly make me full payment whenever I substantiate my claims. After resting for a while from his fatigues, he set about obtaining, in the inn where he was quartered, some preliminary knowledge of the situation of his debtors.

"How stands it with Peter Martens?" inquired he one day of his companions at table; "is he still living, and doing much business?"

"Peter Martens is a warm man," answered one of the party; "has a brisk commission trade, and draws good profit from it."

"Is Fabian van Plürs still in good circumstances?"

"O! there is no end to Fabian's wealth. He is a Councillor; his woollen manufactories are thriving incredibly."

"Has Jonathan Frischkier good custom in his trade?"

"Ah! Jonathan were now a brisk fellow, had not Kaiser Max let the French chouse him out of his Princess.[1] Jonathan had got the furnishing of the lace for the bride's dress; but the Kaiser has left poor Frischkier in the lurch, as the bride has left himself. If you have a fair one, whom you would remember with a bit of lace, he will give it you at half-price."

"Is the firm Op de Bütekant still standing, or has it sunk?"

"There was a crack in the beams there some years ago;

[1] Anne of Brittany.

but the Spanish caravelles have put a new prop to it, and it now holds fast."

Franz inquired about several other merchants who were on his list; found that most of them, though in his father's time they had "failed," were now standing firmly on their legs; and inferred from this, that a judicious bankruptcy has, from of old, been the mine of future gains. This intelligence refreshed him mightily: he hastened to put his documents in order, and submit them to the proper parties. But with the Antwerpers, he fared as his itinerating countrymen do with shopkeepers in the German towns: they find everywhere a friendly welcome at their first appearance, but are looked upon with cheerfulness nowhere when they come collecting debts. Some would have nothing to do with these former sins; and were of opinion, that by the tender of the legal five-per-cent composition they had been entirely abolished: it was the creditor's fault if he had not accepted payment in time. Others could not recollect any Melchior of Bremen; opened their Infallible Books; found no debtor-entry marked for this unknown name. Others, again, brought out a strong counter-reckoning; and three days had not passed till Franz was sitting in the Debtors' Ward, to answer for his father's credit, not to depart till he had paid the uttermost farthing.

These were not the best prospects for the young man, who had set his hope and trust upon the Antwerp patrons of his fortune, and now saw the fair soap-bubble vanish quite away. In his strait confinement, he felt himself in the condition of a soul in Purgatory, now that his skiff had run ashore and gone to pieces, in the middle of the haven where he thought to find security. Every thought of Meta was as a thorn in his heart; there was now no shadow of a possibility, that from the whirlpool which had sunk him, he could ever rise, and stretch out his hand to her; nor, suppose he should get his head above water, was it in poor Meta's power to pull him on dry land. He fell into a sullen desperation; had no wish

but to die speedily, and give his woes the slip at once; and, in fact, he did attempt to kill himself by starvation. But this is a sort of death which is not at the beck of every one, so ready as the shrunk Pomponius Atticus found it, when his digestive apparatus had already struck work. A sound peptic stomach does not yield so tamely to the precepts of the head or heart. After the moribund debtor had abstained two days from food, a ravenous hunger suddenly usurped the government of his will, and performed, of its own authority, all the operations which, in other cases, are directed by the mind. It ordered his hand to seize the spoon, his mouth to receive the victual, his inferior maxillary jaw to get in motion, and itself accomplished the usual functions of digestion, unordered. Thus did this last resolve make shipwreck, on a hard bread-crust; for, in the seven-and-twentieth year of life, it has a heroism connected with it, which in the seven-and-seventieth is entirely gone.

At bottom, it was not the object of the barbarous Antwerpers to squeeze money from the pretended debtor, but only to pay him none, as his demands were not admitted to be liquid. Whether it were, then, that the public Prayer in Bremen had in truth a little virtue, or that the supposed creditors were not desirous of supporting a superfluous boarder for life, true it is, that after the lapse of three months Franz was delivered from his imprisonment, under the condition of leaving the city within four-and-twenty hours, and never again setting foot on the soil and territory of Antwerp. At the same time, he received five crowns for travelling expenses from the faithful hands of Justice, which had taken charge of his horse and luggage, and conscientiously balanced the produce of the same against judicial and curatory expenses.

With heavy-laden heart, in the humblest mood, with his staff in his hand, he left the rich city, into which he had ridden some time ago with high-soaring hopes. Broken down, and undetermined what to do, or rather altogether

without thought, he plodded through the streets to the nearest gate, not minding whither the road into which chance conducted him might lead. He saluted no traveller, he asked for no inn, except when fatigue or hunger forced him to lift up his eyes, and look around for some church-spire, or sign of human habitation, when he needed human aid. Many days he had wandered on, as if unconsciously; and a secret instinct had still, by means of his uncrazed feet, led him right forward on the way to home; when, all at once, he awoke as from an oppressive dream, and perceived on what road he was travelling.

He halted instantly, to consider whether he should proceed or turn back. Shame and confusion took possession of his soul, when he thought of skulking about in his native town as a beggar, branded with the mark of contempt, and claiming the charitable help of his townsmen, whom of old he had eclipsed by his wealth and magnificence. And how in this form could he present himself before his fair Meta, without disgracing the choice of her heart? He did not leave his fancy time to finish this doleful picture; but wheeled about to take the other road, as hastily as if he had been standing even then at the gate of Bremen, and the ragged apprentices had been assembling to accompany him with gibes and mockery through the streets. His purpose was formed: he would make for the nearest seaport in the Netherlands; engage as sailor in a Spanish ship, to work his passage to the new world; and not return to his country, till in the Peruvian land of gold he should have regained the wealth, which he had squandered so heedlessly, before he knew the worth of money. In the shaping of this new plan, it is true, the fair Meta fell so far into the background, that even to the sharpest prophetic eye she could only hover as a faint shadow in the distance; yet the wandering projector pleased himself with thinking that she was again interwoven with the scheme of his life; and he took large steps, as if by this rapidity he meant to reach her so much the sooner.

Already he was on the Flemish soil once more; and found himself at sunset not far from Rheinberg, in a little hamlet, Rummelsburg by name, which has since, in the Thirty-Years War, been utterly destroyed. A caravan of carriers from Lyke had already filled the inn, so that Mine Host had no room left, and referred him to the next town; the rather that he did not draw too flattering a presage from his present vagabond physiognomy, and held him to be a thieves' purveyor, who had views upon the Lyke carriers. He was forced, notwithstanding his excessive weariness, to gird himself for march, and again to take his bundle on his back.

As in retiring, he was muttering between his teeth some bitter complaints and curses of the Landlord's hardness of heart, the latter seemed to take some pity on the forlorn wayfarer, and called after him, from the door: "Stay, neighbour, let me speak to you: if you wish to rest here, I can accommodate you after all. In that Castle there are empty rooms enow, if they be not too lonely; it is not inhabited, and I have got the keys." Franz accepted the proposal with joy, praised it as a deed of mercy, and requested only shelter and a supper, were it in a castle or a cottage. Mine Host, however, was privily a rogue, whom it had galled to hear the stranger drop some half-audible contumelies against him, and meant to be avenged on him, by a Hobgoblin that inhabited the old fortress, and had many long years before expelled the owners.

The Castle lay hard by the hamlet, on a steep rock, right opposite the inn, from which it was divided merely by the highway, and a little gurgling brook. The situation being so agreeable, the edifice was still kept in repair, and well provided with all sorts of house-gear; for it served the owner as a hunting-lodge, where he frequently caroused all day; and so soon as the stars began to twinkle in the sky, retired with his whole retinue, to escape the mischief of the Ghost, who rioted about in it the whole night over, but by day gave no disturbance. Unpleasant as the owner felt this

spoiling of his mansion by a bugbear, the nocturnal sprite was not without advantages, for the great security it gave from thieves. The Count could have appointed no trustier or more watchful keeper over the Castle, than this same Spectre, for the rashest troop of robbers never ventured to approach its station. Accordingly he knew of no safer place for laying up his valuables, than this old tower, in the hamlet of Rummelsburg, near Rheinberg.

The sunshine had sunk, the dark night was coming heavily on, when Franz, with a lantern in his hand, proceeded to the castle-gate, under the guidance of Mine Host, who carried in his hand a basket of victuals, with a flask of wine, which he said should not be marked against him. He had also taken along with him a pair of candlesticks, and two wax-lights; for in the whole Castle there was neither lamp nor taper, as no one ever stayed in it after twilight. In the way, Franz noticed the creaking heavy-laden basket, and the wax-lights, which he thought he should not need, and yet must pay for. Therefore he said: "What is this superfluity and waste, as at a banquet? The light in the lantern is enough to see with, till I go to bed; and when I awake, the sun will be high enough, for I am tired completely, and shall sleep with both eyes."

"I will not hide from you," replied the Landlord, "that a story runs of there being mischief in the Castle, and a Goblin that frequents it. You, however, need not let the thing disturb you; we are near enough, you see, for you to call us, should you meet with aught unnatural; I and my folks will be at your hand in a twinkling, to assist you. Down in the house there we keep astir all night through, some one is always moving. I have lived here these thirty years; yet I cannot say that I have ever seen aught. If there be now and then a little hurly-burlying at nights, it is nothing but cats and martins rummaging about the granary. As a precaution, I have provided you with candles: the night is no friend of man; and the tapers are consecrated, so that

sprites, if there be such in the Castle, will avoid their shine."

It was no lying in Mine Host to say that he had never seen anything of spectres in the Castle; for by night he had taken special care not once to set foot in it; and by day the Goblin did not come to sight. In the present case, too, the traitor would not risk himself across the border. After opening the door, he handed Franz the basket, directed him what way to go, and wished him good-night. Franz entered the lobby without anxiety or fear; believing the ghost-story to be empty tattle, or a distorted tradition of some real occurrence in the place, which idle fancy had shaped into an unnatural adventure. He remembered the stout Ritter Eberhard Bronkhorst, from whose heavy arm he had apprehended such maltreatment, and with whom, notwithstanding, he had found so hospitable a reception. On this ground he had laid it down as a rule deduced from his travelling experiences, when he heard any common rumour, to believe exactly the reverse, and left the grain of truth, which, in the opinion of the wise Knight, always lies in such reports, entirely out of sight.

Pursuant to Mine Host's direction, he ascended the winding stone stair; and reached a bolted door, which he opened with his key. A long dark gallery, where his footsteps resounded, led him into a large hall, and from this, a side-door, into a suite of apartments, richly provided with all furniture for decoration or convenience. Out of these he chose the room which had the friendliest aspect, where he found a well-pillowed bed; and from the window could look right down upon the inn, and catch every loud word that was spoken there. He lit his wax-tapers, furnished his table, and feasted with the commodiousness and relish of an Otaheitean noble. The big-bellied flask was an antidote to thirst. So long as his teeth were in full occupation, he had no time to think of the reported devilry in the Castle. If aught now and then made a stir in the distance, and Fear

called to him, "Hark! hark! there comes the Goblin"; Courage answered: "Stuff! it is cats and martins bickering and caterwauling." But in the digestive half-hour after meat, when the sixth sense, that of hunger and thirst, no longer occupied the soul, she directed her attention from the other five exclusively upon the sense of hearing; and already Fear was whispering three timid thoughts into the listener's ear, before Courage had time to answer once.

As the first resource, he locked the door, and bolted it; made his retreat to the walled seat in the vault of the window. He opened this, and to dissipate his thoughts a little, looked out on the spangled sky, gazed at the corroded moon, and counted how often the stars snuffed themselves. On the road beneath him all was void; and in spite of the pretended nightly bustle in the inn, the doors were shut, the lights out, and everything as still as in a sepulchre. On the other hand, the watchman blew his horn, making his "List, gentlemen!" sound over all the hamlet; and for the composure of the timorous astronomer, who still kept feasting his eyes on the splendour of the stars, uplifted a rusty evening-hymn right under his window; so that Franz might easily have carried on a conversation with him, which, for the sake of company, he would willingly have done, had he in the least expected that the watchman would make answer to him.

In a populous city, in the middle of a numerous household, where there is a hubbub equal to that of a bee-hive, it may form a pleasant entertainment for the thinker to philosophise on Solitude, to decorate her as the loveliest playmate of the human spirit, to view her under all her advantageous aspects, and long for her enjoyment as for hidden treasure. But in scenes where she is no exotic, in the isle of Juan Fernandez, where a solitary eremite, escaped from shipwreck, lives with her through long years; or in the dreary night-time, in a deep wood, or in an old uninhabited castle, where empty walls and vaults awaken horror, and nothing breathes of life,

but the moping owl in the ruinous turret; there, in good sooth, she is not the most agreeable companion for the timid anchorite that has to pass his time in her abode, especially if he is every moment looking for the entrance of a spectre to augment the party. In such a case it may easily chance that a window conversation with the watchman shall afford a richer entertainment for the spirit and the heart, than a reading of the most attractive eulogy on solitude. If Ritter Zimmermann had been in Franz's place, in the castle of Rummelsburg, on the Westphalian marches, he would doubtless in this position have struck out the fundamental topics of as interesting a treatise on *Society*, as, inspired to all appearance by the irksomeness of some ceremonious assembly, he has poured out from the fulness of his heart in praise of *Solitude*.

Midnight is the hour at which the world of spirits acquires activity and life, when hebetated animal nature lies entombed in deep slumber. Franz inclined getting through this critical hour in sleep rather than awake; so he closed his window, went the rounds of his room once more, spying every nook and crevice, to see whether all was safe and earthly; snuffed the lights to make them burn clearer; and without undressing or delaying, threw himself upon his bed, with which his wearied person felt unusual satisfaction. Yet he could not get asleep so fast as he wished. A slight palpitation at the heart, which he ascribed to a tumult in the blood, arising from the sultriness of the day, kept him waking for a while; and he failed not to employ this respite in offering up such a pithy evening prayer as he had not prayed for many years. This produced the usual effect, that he softly fell asleep while saying it.

After about an hour, as he supposed, he started up with a sudden terror; a thing not at all surprising when there is tumult in the blood. He was broad awake: he listened whether all was quiet, and heard nothing but the clock strike twelve; a piece of news which the watchman forthwith com-

municated to the hamlet in doleful recitative. Franz listened for a while, turned on the other side, and was again about to sleep, when he caught, as it were, the sound of a door grating in the distance, and immediately it shut with a stifled bang. "Alake! alake!" bawled Fright into his ear; "this is the Ghost in very deed!"—"'Tis nothing but the wind," said Courage manfully. But quickly it came nearer, nearer, like the sound of heavy footsteps. Clink here, clink there, as if a criminal were rattling his irons, or as if the porter were walking about the Castle with his bunch of keys. Alas, here was no wind business! Courage held his peace; and quaking Fear drove all the blood to the heart, and made it thump like a smith's fore-hammer.

The thing was now beyond jesting. If Fear would still have let Courage get a word, the latter would have put the terror-struck watcher in mind of his subsidiary treaty with Mine Host, and incited him to claim the stipulated assistance loudly from the window; but for this there was a want of proper resolution. The quaking Franz had recourse to the bed-clothes, the last fortress of the timorous, and drew them close over his ears, as Bird Ostrich sticks his head in the grass, when he can no longer escape the huntsman. Outside it came along, door up, door to, with hideous uproar; and at last it reached the bed-room. It jerked sharply at the lock, tried several keys till it found the right one; yet the bar still held the door, till a bounce like a thunder-clap made bolt and rivet start, and threw it wide open. Now stalked in a long lean man, with a black beard, in ancient garb, and with a gloomy countenance, his eyebrows hanging down in deep earnestness from his brow. Over his right shoulder he had a scarlet cloak; and on his head he wore a peaked hat. With a heavy step he walked thrice in silence up and down the chamber; looked at the consecrated tapers, and snuffed them that they might burn brighter. Then he threw aside his cloak, girded on a scissor-pouch which he had under it, produced a set of shaving-tackle, and immediately

began to whet a sharp razor on the broad strap which he wore at his girdle.

Franz perspired in mortal agony under his coverlet; recommended himself to the keeping of the Virgin; and anxiously speculated on the object of this manœuvre, not knowing whether it was meant for his throat or his beard. To his comfort, the Goblin poured some water from a silver flask into a basin of silver, and with his skinny hand lathered the soap into light foam; then set a chair, and beckoned with a solemn look to the quaking looker-on to come forth from his recess.

Against so pertinent a sign, remonstrance was as bootless as it is against the rigorous commands of the Grand Turk, when he transmits an exiled vizier to the Angel of Death, the Capichi Bashi with the Silken Cord, to take delivery of his head. The most rational procedure that can be adopted in this critical case, is to comply with necessity, put a good face on a bad business, and with stoical composure let one's throat be noosed. Franz honoured the Spectre's order; the coverlet began to move, he sprang sharply from his couch, and took the place pointed out to him on the seat. However strange this quick transition from the uttermost terror to the boldest resolution may appear, I doubt not but Moritz in his *Psychological Journal* could explain the matter till it seemed quite natural.

Immediately the Goblin Barber tied the towel about his shivering customer; seized the comb and scissors, and clipped off his hair and beard. Then he soaped him scientifically, first the beard, next the eyebrows, at last the temples and the hind-head; and shaved him from throat to nape as smooth and bald as a Death's-head. This operation finished, he washed his head, dried it clean, made his bow, and buttoned-up his scissor-pouch; wrapped himself in his scarlet mantle, and made for departing. The consecrated tapers had burnt with an exquisite brightness through the whole transaction; and Franz, by the light of them, perceived in

the mirror that the shaver had changed him into a Chinese pagoda. In secret he heartily deplored the loss of his fair brown locks; yet now took fresh breath, as he observed that with this sacrifice the account was settled, and the Ghost had no more power over him.

So it was in fact; Redcloak went towards the door, silently as he had entered, without salutation or good-b'ye; and seemed entirely the contrast of his talkative guild-brethren. But scarcely was he gone three steps, when he paused, looked round with a mournful expression at his well-served customer, and stroked the flat of his hand over his black bushy beard. He did the same a second time; and again just as he was in the act of stepping out at the door, a thought struck Franz that the Spectre wanted something; and a rapid combination of ideas suggested, that perhaps he was expecting the very service he himself had just performed.

As the Ghost, notwithstanding his rueful look, seemed more disposed for banter than for seriousness, and had played his guest a scurvy trick, not done him any real injury, the panic of the latter had now almost subsided. So he ventured the experiment, and beckoned to the Ghost to take the seat from which he had himself just risen. The Goblin instantly obeyed, threw off his cloak, laid his barber tackle on the table, and placed himself in the chair, in the posture of a man that wishes to be shaved. Franz carefully observed the same procedure which the Spectre had observed to him, clipped his beard with the scissors, cropt away his hair, lathered his whole scalp, and the Ghost all the while sat steady as a wig-block. The awkward journeyman came ill at handling the razor: he had never had another in his hand; and he shore the beard right against the hair; whereat the Goblin made as strange grimaces as Erasmus's Ape, when imitating its master's shaving. Nor was the unpractised bungler himself well at ease, and he thought more than once of the sage aphorism, *What is not thy trade make not thy business*; yet he struggled through the task, the

best way he could, and scraped the Ghost as bald as he himself was.

Hitherto the scene between the Spectre and the traveller had been played pantomimically; the action now became dramatic. "Stranger," said the Ghost, "accept my thanks for the service thou hast done me. By thee I am delivered from the long imprisonment, which has chained me for three hundred years within these walls; to which my departed soul was doomed, till a mortal hand should consent to retaliate on me what I practised on others in my lifetime.

"Know that of old a reckless scorner dwelt within this tower, who took his sport on priests as well as laics. Count Hardman, such his name, was no philanthropist, acknowledged no superior and no law, but practised vain caprice and waggery, regarding not the sacredness of hospitable rights: the wanderer who came beneath his roof, the needy man who asked a charitable alms of him, he never sent away unvisited by wicked joke. I was his Castle Barber, still a willing instrument, and did whatever pleased him. Many a pious pilgrim, journeying past us, I allured with friendly speeches to the hall; prepared the bath for him, and when he thought to take good comfort, shaved him smooth and bald, and packed him out of doors. Then would Count Hardman, looking from the window, see with pleasure how the foxes' whelps of children gathered from the hamlet to assail the outcast, and to cry as once their fellows to Elisha: 'Baldhead! Baldhead!' In this the scoffer took his pleasure, laughing with a devilish joy, till he would hold his potpaunch, and his eyes ran down with water.

"Once came a saintly man, from foreign lands; he carried, like a penitent, a heavy cross upon his shoulder, and had stamped five nail-marks on his hands, and feet, and side; upon his head there was a ring of hair like to the Crown of Thorns. He called upon us here, requesting water for his feet, and a small crust of bread. Immediately I took him to the bath, to serve him in my common way; respected not the

sacred ring, but shore it clean from off him. Then the pious pilgrim spoke a heavy malison upon me: 'Know, accursed man, that when thou diest, Heaven, and Hell, and Purgatory's iron gate, are shut against thy soul. As goblin it shall rage within these walls, till unrequired, unbid, a traveller come and exercise retaliation on thee.'

"That hour I sickened, and the marrow in my bones dried up; I faded like a shadow. My spirit left the wasted carcass, and was exiled to this Castle, as the saint had doomed it. In vain I struggled for deliverance from the torturing bonds that fettered me to Earth; for thou must know, that when the soul forsakes her clay, she panteth for her place of rest, and this sick longing spins her years to æons, while in foreign element she languishes for home. Now self-tormenting, I pursued the mournful occupation I had followed in my lifetime. Alas! my uproar soon made desolate this house! But seldom came a pilgrim here to lodge. And though I treated all like thee, no one would understand me, and perform, as thou, the service which has freed my soul from bondage. Henceforth shall no hobgoblin wander in this Castle; I return to my long-wished-for rest. And now, young stranger, once again my thanks, that thou hast loosed me! Were I keeper of deep-hidden treasures, they were thine; but wealth in life was not my lot, nor in this Castle lies there any cash entombed. Yet mark my counsel. Tarry here till beard and locks again shall cover chin and scalp; then turn thee homewards to thy native town; and on the Weser-bridge of Bremen, at the time when day and night in Autumn are alike, wait for a Friend, who there will meet thee, who will tell thee what to do, that it be well with thee on Earth. If from the golden horn of plenty, blessing and abundance flow to thee, then think of me; and ever as the day thou freedst me from the curse comes round, cause for my soul's repose three masses to be said. Now fare thee well. I go, no more returning."[1]

[1] I know not whether the reader has observed that our Author makes the

With these words the Ghost, having by his copiousness of talk satisfactorily attested his former existence as court-barber in the Castle of Rummelsburg, vanished into air, and left his deliverer full of wonder at the strange adventure. He stood for a long while motionless; in doubt whether the whole matter had actually happened, or an unquiet dream had deluded his senses; but his bald head convinced him that here had been a real occurrence. He returned to bed, and slept, after the fright he had undergone, till the hour of noon. The treacherous Landlord had been watching since morning, when the traveller with the scalp was to come forth, that he might receive him with gibing speeches under pretext of astonishment at his nocturnal adventure. But as the stranger loitered too long, and mid-day was approaching, the affair became serious; and Mine Host began to dread that the Goblin might have treated his guest a little harshly, have beaten him to a jelly perhaps, or so frightened him that he had died of terror; and to carry his wanton revenge to such a length as this had not been his intention. He therefore rang his people together, hastened out with man and maid to the tower, and reached the door of the apartment where he had observed the light on the previous evening. He found an unknown key in the lock; but the door was barred within; for after the disappearance of the Goblin, Franz had again secured it. He knocked with a perturbed violence, till the Seven Sleepers themselves would have awoke at the din. Franz started up, and thought in his first confusion that the Ghost was again standing at the door, to favour him with another call. But hearing Mine Host's voice, who required nothing more but that his guest would give some sign of life, he gathered himself up and opened the room.

With seeming horror at the sight of him, Mine Host, striking his hands together, exclaimed: "By Heaven and all the saints! Redcloak" (by this name the Ghost was known

Spectre speak in *iambics*; a whim which here and there comes over him in other tales also.—WIELAND.

among them) "*has* been here, and has shaved you bald as a block! Now, it is clear as day that the old story is no fable. But tell me how looked the Goblin: what did he say to you? what did he do?"

Franz, who had now seen through the questioner, made answer: "The Goblin looked like a man in a red cloak; what he did is not hidden from you, and what he said I well remember: 'Stranger,' said he, 'trust no innkeeper who is a Turk in grain. What would befall thee here he knew. Be wise and happy. I withdraw from this my ancient dwelling, for my time is run. Henceforth no goblin riots here; I now become a silent Incubus, to plague the Landlord; nip him, tweak him, harass him, unless the Turk do expiate his sin; do freely give thee prog and lodging till brown locks again shall cluster round thy head.'"[1]

The Landlord shuddered at these words, cut a large cross in the air before him, vowed by the Holy Virgin to give the traveller free board so long as he liked to continue, led him over to his house, and treated him with the best. By this adventure, Franz had well-nigh got the reputation of a conjuror, as the spirit thenceforth never once showed face. He often passed the night in the tower; and a desperado of the village once kept him company, without having beard or scalp disturbed. The owner of the place, having learned that Redcloak no longer walked in Rummelsburg, was, of course, delighted at the news, and ordered that the stranger, who, as he supposed, had laid him, should be well taken care of.

By the time when the clusters were beginning to be coloured on the vine, and the advancing autumn reddened the apples, Franz's brown locks were again curling over his temples, and he girded up his knapsack; for all his thoughts and meditations were turned upon the Weser-bridge, to seek the Friend, who, at the behest of the Goblin Barber, was to direct him how to make his fortune. When about taking

[1] Here too, on the Spectre's score, Franz makes extempore *iambics*.—WIELAND.

leave of Mine Host, that charitable person led from his stable a horse well saddled and equipt, which the owner of the Castle had presented to the stranger, for having made his house again habitable; nor had the Count forgot to send a sufficient purse along with it, to bear its travelling charges; and so Franz came riding back into his native city, brisk and light of heart, as he had ridden out of it twelve months ago. He sought out his old quarters in the alley, but kept himself quite still and retired; only inquiring underhand how matters stood with the fair Meta, whether she was still alive and unwedded. To this inquiry he received a satisfactory answer, and contented himself with it in the mean while; for, till his fate were decided, he would not risk appearing in her sight, or making known to her his arrival in Bremen.

With unspeakable longing, he waited the equinox; his impatience made every intervening day a year. At last the long-wished-for term appeared. The night before, he could not close an eye, for thinking of the wonders that were coming. The blood was whirling and beating in his arteries, as it had done at the Castle of Rummelsburg, when he lay in expectation of his spectre visitant. To be sure of not missing his expected Friend, he rose by daybreak, and proceeded with the earliest dawn to the Weser-bridge, which as yet stood empty and untrod by passengers. He walked along it several times in solitude, with that presentiment of coming gladness, which includes in it the real enjoyment of all terrestrial felicity; for it is not the attainment of our wishes, but the undoubted hope of attaining them, which offers to the human soul the full measure of highest and most heartfelt satisfaction. He formed many projects as to how he should present himself to his beloved Meta, when his looked-for happiness should have arrived; whether it would be better to appear before her in full splendour, or to mount from his former darkness with the first gleam of morning radiance, and discover to her by degrees the change in his condition.

Curiosity, moreover, put a thousand questions to Reason in regard to the adventure. Who can the Friend be that is to meet me on the Weser-bridge? Will it be one of my old acquaintances, by whom, since my ruin, I have been entirely forgotten? How will he pave the way to me for happiness? And will this way be short or long, easy or toilsome? To the whole of which Reason, in spite of all her thinking and speculating, answered not a word.

In about an hour, the Bridge began to get awake; there was riding, driving, walking to and fro on it; and much commercial ware passing this way and that. The usual day-guard of beggars and importunate persons also by degrees took up this post, so favourable for their trade, to levy contributions on the public benevolence; for of poor-houses and work-houses, the wisdom of the legislature had as yet formed no scheme. The first of the tattered cohort that applied for alms to the jovial promenader, from whose eyes gay hope laughed forth, was a discharged soldier, provided with the military badge of a timber leg, which had been lent him, seeing he had fought so stoutly in former days for his native country, as the recompense of his valour, with the privilege of begging where he pleased; and who now, in the capacity of physiognomist, pursued the study of man upon the Weser-bridge, with such success, that he very seldom failed in his attempts for charity. Nor did his exploratory glance in anywise mislead him in the present instance; for Franz, in the joy of his heart, threw a white engel-groschen into the cripple's hat.

During the morning hours, when none but the laborious artisan is busy, and the more exalted townsman still lies in sluggish rest, he scarcely looked for his promised Friend; he expected him in the higher classes, and took little notice of the present passengers. About the council-hour, however, when the Proceres of Bremen were driving past to the hall, in their gorgeous robes of office, and about exchange-time, he was all eye and ear; he spied the passengers from afar; and

when a right man came along the bridge, his blood began to flutter, and he thought here was the creator of his fortune. Meanwhile hour after hour passed on; the sun rose high; ere long the noontide brought a pause in business; the rushing crowd faded away; and still the expected Friend appeared not. Franz now walked up and down the Bridge quite alone; had no society in view but the beggars, who were serving out their cold collations, without moving from the place. He made no scruple to do the same; and, not being furnished with provisions, he purchased some fruit, and took his dinner *inter ambulandum*.

The whole club that was dining on the Bridge had remarked the young man, watching here from early morning till noon, without addressing any one, or doing any sort of business. They held him to be a lounger; and though all of them had tasted his bounty, he did not escape their critical remarks. In jest, they had named him the Bridge-bailiff. The physiognomist with the timber-toe, however, noticed that his countenance was not now so gay as in the morning; he appeared to be reflecting earnestly on something; he had drawn his hat close over his face; his movement was slow and thoughtful; he had nibbled at an apple-rind for some time, without seeming to be conscious that he was doing so. From this appearance of affairs, the man-spier thought he might extract some profit; therefore he put his wooden and his living leg in motion, and stilted off to the other end of the Bridge, and lay in wait for the thinker, that he might assail him, under the appearance of a new arrival, for a fresh alms. This invention prospered to the full: the musing philosopher gave no heed to the mendicant, put his hand into his pocket mechanically, and threw a six-groat piece into the fellow's hat, to be rid of him.

In the afternoon, a thousand new faces once more came abroad. The watcher was now tired of his unknown Friend's delaying, yet hope still kept his attention on the stretch. He stept into the view of every passenger, hoped that one of them

would clasp him in his arms; but all proceeded coldly on their way; the most did not observe him at all, and few returned his salute with a slight nod. The sun was already verging to decline, the shadows were becoming longer, the crowd upon the Bridge diminished; and the beggar-piquet by degrees drew back into their barracks in the Mattenburg. A deep sadness sank upon the hopeless Franz, when he saw his expectation mocked, and the lordly prospect which had lain before him in the morning vanish from his eyes at evening. He fell into a sort of sulky desperation; was on the point of springing over the parapet, and dashing himself down from the Bridge into the river. But the thought of Meta kept him back, and induced him to postpone his purpose till he had seen her yet once more. He resolved to watch next day when she should go to church, for the last time to drink delight from her looks, and then forthwith to still his warm love forever in the cold stream of the Weser.

While about to leave the Bridge, he was met by the invalided pikeman with the wooden leg, who, for pastime, had been making many speculations as to what could be the young man's object, that had made him watch upon the Bridge from dawn to darkness. He himself had lingered beyond his usual time, that he might wait him out; but as the matter hung too long upon the pegs, curiosity incited him to turn to the youth himself, and question him respecting it.

"No offence, young gentleman," said he: "allow me to ask you a question."

Franz, who was not in a very talking humour, and was now meeting, from the mouth of a cripple, the address which he had looked for with such longing from a friend, answered rather testily: "Well, then, what is it? Speak, old graybeard!"

"We two," said the other, "were the first upon the Bridge today, and now, you see, we are the last. As to me and others of my kidney, it is our vocation brings us hither, our

trade of alms-gathering; but for you, in sooth you are not of our guild; yet you have watched here the whole blessed day. Now I pray you, tell me, if it is not a secret, what it is that brings you hither; or what stone is lying on your heart, that you wished to roll away."

"What good were it to thee, old blade," said Franz bitterly, "to know where the shoe pinches me, or what concern is lying on my heart? It will give thee small care."

"Sir, I have a kind wish towards you, because you opened your hand to me, and twice gave me alms, for which God reward you; but your countenance at night was not so cheerful as in the morning, and that grieves my heart."

The kindly sympathy of this old warrior pleased the misanthrope, so that he willingly pursued the conversation.

"Why, then," answered he, "if thou wouldst know what has made me battle here all day with tedium, thou must understand that I was waiting for a Friend, who appointed me hither, and now leaves me to expect in vain."

"Under favour," answered Timbertoe, "if I might speak my mind, this Friend of yours, be who he like, is little better than a rogue to lead you such a dance. If he treated *me* so, by my faith, his crown should get acquainted with my crutch next time we met. If he could not keep his word, he should have let you know, and not bamboozled you as if you were a child."

"Yet I cannot altogether blame this Friend," said Franz, "for being absent; he did not promise; it was but a dream that told me I should meet him here."

The goblin-tale was too long for him to tell, so he veiled it under cover of a dream.

"Ah! that is another story," said the beggar; "if you build on dreams, it is little wonder that your hope deceives you. I myself have dreamed much foolish stuff in my time; but I was never such a madman as to heed it. Had I all the treasures that have been allotted to me in dreams, I might buy the city of Bremen, were it sold by auction. But I never

credited a jot of them, or stirred hand or foot to prove their worth or worthlessness: I knew well it would be lost. Ha! I must really laugh in your face, to think that on the order of an empty dream, you have squandered a fair day of your life, which you might have spent better at a merry banquet."

"The issue shows that thou art right, old man, and that dreams many times deceive. But," continued Franz, defensively, "I dreamed so vividly and circumstantially, above three months ago, that on this very day, in this very place, I should meet a Friend, who would tell me things of the deepest importance, that it was well worth while to go and see if it would come to pass."

"O, as for vividness," said Timbertoe, "no man can dream more vividly than I. There is one dream I had, which I shall never in my life forget. I dreamed, who knows how many years ago, that my Guardian Angel stood before my bed in the figure of a youth, with golden hair, and two silver wings on his back, and said to me: 'Berthold, listen to the words of my mouth, that none of them be lost from thy heart. There is a treasure appointed thee, which thou shalt dig, to comfort thy heart withal for the remaining days of thy life. Tomorrow, about evening, when the sun is going down, take spade and shovel on thy shoulder; go forth from the Mattenburg on the right, across the Tieber, by the Balkenbrücke, past the Cloister of St. John's, and on to the Great Roland.[1] Then take thy way over the Court of the Cathedral through the Schüsselkorb, till thou arrive without the city at a garden, which has this mark, that a stair of three stone steps leads down from the highway to its gate. Wait by a side, in secret, till the sickle of the moon shall shine on thee, then push with the

[1] The rude figure of a man in armour, usually erected in the public square or market-place of old German towns, is called the *Rolandsäule*, or *Rutlandsäule*, from its supposed reference to Roland the famous peer of Charlemagne. The proper and ancient name, it seems, is *Rügelandsäule*, or Pillar of Judgment; and the stone indicated, of old, that the town possessed an independent jurisdiction. —Ed.

strength of a man against the weak-barred gate, which will resist thee little. Enter boldly into the garden, and turn thee to the vine-trellises which overhang the covered-walk; behind this, on the left, a tall apple-tree overtops the lowly shrubs. Go to the trunk of this tree, thy face turned right against the moon: look three ells before thee on the ground, thou shalt see two cinnamon-rose bushes; there strike in, and dig three spans deep, till thou find a stone plate; under this lies the treasure, buried in an iron chest, full of money and money's worth. Though the chest be heavy and clumsy, avoid not the labour of lifting it from its bed; it will reward thy trouble well, if thou seek the key which lies hid beneath it.'"

In astonishment at what he heard, Franz stared and gazed upon the dreamer, and could not have concealed his amazement, had not the dusk of night been on his side. By every mark in the description, he had recognised his own garden, left him by his father. It had been the good man's hobby in his life; but on this account had little pleased his son; according to the rule that son and father seldom sympathise in their favourite pursuit, unless indeed it be a vice, in which case, as the adage runs, the apple often falls at no great distance from the trunk. Father Melchior had himself laid out this garden, altogether to his own taste, in a style as wonderful and varied as that of his great-great-grandson, who has immortalised his paradise by an original description in *Hirschfeld's Garden-Calendar*. He had not, it is true, set up in it any painted menagerie for the deception of the eye; but he kept a very large one, notwithstanding, of springing-horses, winged-lions, eagles, griffins, unicorns and other wondrous beasts, all stamped on pure gold, which he carefully concealed from *every* eye, and had hid in their iron case beneath the ground. This paternal Tempe the wasteful son, in the days of his extravagance, had sold for an old song.

To Franz the pikeman had at once become extremely

interesting, as he perceived that this was the very Friend, to whom the Goblin in the Castle of Rummelsburg had consigned him. Gladly could he have embraced the veteran, and in the first rapture called him friend and father: but he restrained himself, and found it more advisable to keep his thoughts about this piece of news to himself. So he said: "Well, this is what I call a circumstantial dream. But what didst thou do, old master, in the morning, on awakening? Didst thou not follow whither thy Guardian Angel beckoned thee?"

"Pooh," said the dreamer, "why should I toil, and have my labour for my pains? It was nothing, after all, but a mere dream. If my Guardian Angel had a fancy for appearing to me, I have had enow of sleepless nights in my time, when he might have found me waking. But he takes little charge of me, I think, else I should not, to his shame, be going hitching here on a wooden leg."

Franz took out the last piece of silver he had on him: "There," said he, "old Father, take this other gift from me, to get thee a pint of wine for evening-cup: thy talk has scared away my ill humour. Neglect not diligently to frequent this Bridge; we shall see each other here, I hope, again."

The lame old man had not gathered so rich a stock of alms for many a day, as he was now possessed of; he blessed his benefactor for his kindness, hopped away into a drinking-shop, to do himself a good turn; while Franz, enlivened with new hope, hastened off to his lodging in the alley.

Next day he got in readiness everything that is required for treasure-digging. The unessential equipments, conjurations, magic formulas, magic girdles, hieroglyphic characters, and suchlike, were entirely wanting; but these are not indispensable, provided there be no failure in the three main requisites: shovel, spade, and, before all, a treasure underground. The necessary implements he carried to the place a little before sunset, and hid them for the mean while in a

hedge; and as to the treasure itself, he had the firm conviction that the Goblin in the Castle, and the Friend on the Bridge, would prove no liars to him. With longing impatience he expected the rising of the moon; and no sooner did she stretch her silver horns over the bushes, than he briskly set to work; observing exactly everything the Invalid had taught him; and happily accomplished the raising of the treasure, without meeting any adventure in the process; without any black dog having frightened him, or any bluish flame having lighted him to the spot.

Father Melchior, in providently burying this penny for a rainy day, had nowise meant that his son should be deprived of so considerable a part of his inheritance. The mistake lay in this, that Death had escorted the testator out of the world in another way than said testator had expected. He had been completely convinced, that he should take his journey, old and full of days, after regulating his temporal concerns with all the formalities of an ordinary sick-bed; for so it had been prophesied to him in his youth. In consequence he purposed, when, according to the usage of the Church, extreme unction should have been dispensed to him, to call his beloved son to his bed-side, having previously dismissed all bystanders; there to give him the paternal blessing, and by way of farewell memorial direct him to this treasure buried in the garden. All this, too, would have happened in just order, if the light of the good old man had departed, like that of a wick whose oil is done; but as Death had privily snuffed him out at a feast, he undesignedly took along with him his Mammon secret to the grave; and almost as many fortunate concurrences were required before the secreted patrimony could arrive at the proper heir, as if it had been forwarded to its address by the hand of Justice itself.

With immeasurable joy the treasure-digger took possession of the shapeless Spanish pieces, which, with a vast multitude of other finer coins, the iron chest had faithfully preserved.

When the first intoxication of delight had in some degree evaporated, he bethought him how the treasure was to be transported, safe and unobserved, into the narrow alley. The burden was too heavy to be carried without help; thus, with the possession of riches, all the cares attendant on them were awakened. The new Crœsus found no better plan, than to intrust his capital to the hollow trunk of a tree that stood behind the garden, in a meadow: the empty chest he again buried under the rose-bush, and smoothed the place as well as possible. In the space of three days, the treasure had been faithfully transmitted by instalments from the hollow tree into the narrow alley; and now the owner of it thought he might with honour lay aside his strict incognito. He dressed himself with the finest; had his Prayer displaced from the church; and required, instead of it, "a Christian Thanksgiving for a Traveller, on returning to his native town, after happily arranging his affairs." He hid himself in a corner of the church, where he could observe the fair Meta, without himself being seen; he turned not his eye from the maiden, and drank from her looks the actual rapture, which in foretaste had restrained him from the break-neck somerset on the Bridge of the Weser. When the Thanksgiving came in hand, a glad sympathy shone forth from all her features, and the cheeks of the virgin glowed with joy. The customary greeting on the way homewards was so full of emphasis, that even to the third party who had noticed them, it would have been intelligible.

Franz now appeared once more on the Exchange; began a branch of trade which in a few weeks extended to the great scale; and as his wealth became daily more apparent, Neighbour Grudge, the scandal-chewer, was obliged to conclude, that in the cashing of his old debts, he must have had more luck than sense. He hired a large house, fronting the Roland, in the Market-place; engaged clerks and warehousemen, and carried on his trade unweariedly. Now the sorrowful populace of parasites again diligently handled the knocker

of his door; appeared in crowds, and suffocated him with assurances of friendship, and joy-wishings on his fresh prosperity; imagined they should once more catch him in their robber claws. But experience had taught him wisdom; he paid them in their own coin, feasted their false friendship on smooth words, and dismissed them with fasting stomachs; which sovereign means for scaring off the cumbersome brood of pickthanks and toad-eaters produced the intended effect, that they betook them elsewhither.

In Bremen, the remounting Melcherson had become the story of the day; the fortune which in some inexplicable manner he had realised, as was supposed, in foreign parts, was the subject-matter of all conversations at formal dinners, in the Courts of Justice and at the Exchange. But in proportion as the fame of his fortune and affluence increased, the contentedness and peace of mind of the fair Meta diminished. The friend *in petto* was now, in her opinion, well qualified to speak a plain word. Yet still his Love continued Dumb; and except the greeting on the way from church, he gave no tidings of himself. Even this sort of visit was becoming rarer, and such aspects were the sign not of warm, but of cold weather in the atmosphere of Love. Jealousy,[1] the baleful Harpy, fluttered round her little room by night, and when sleep was closing her blue eyes, croaked many a dolorous presage into the ear of the re-awakened Meta. "Forego the flattering hope of binding an inconstant heart, which, like a feather, is the sport of every wind. He loved thee, and was faithful to thee, while his lot was as thy own: like only draws to like. Now a propitious destiny exalts the Changeful far above thee. Ah! now he scorns the truest thoughts in mean apparel, now that pomp, and wealth, and splendour dazzle him once more; and courts who knows what haughty fair one that disdained him when he lay among the pots, and now with siren call allures him back to her. Perhaps

[1] Jealousy too (at bottom a very sad spectre, but not here introduced as one) now *croaks* in iambics, as the Goblin Barber lately spoke in them.—WIELAND.

her cozening voice has turned him from thee, speaking with false words : ' For thee, God's garden blossoms in thy native town : friend, thou hast now thy choice of all our maidens ; choose with prudence, not by the eye alone. Of girls are many, and of fathers many, who in secret lie in wait for thee ; none will withhold his darling daughter. Take happiness and honour with the fairest ; likewise birth and fortune. The councillor dignity awaits thee, where vote of friends is potent in the city.' "

These suggestions of Jealousy disturbed and tormented her heart without ceasing : she reviewed her fair contemporaries in Bremen, estimated the ratio of so many splendid matches to herself and her circumstances ; and the result was far from favourable. The first tidings of her lover's change of situation had in secret charmed her ; not in the selfish view of becoming participatress in a large fortune ; but for her mother's sake, who had abdicated all hopes of earthly happiness, ever since the marriage project with neighbour Hop-King had made shipwreck. But now poor Meta wished that Heaven had not heard the Prayer of the Church, or granted to the traveller any such abundance of success ; but rather kept him by the bread and salt, which he would willingly have shared with her.

The fair half of the species are by no means calculated to conceal an inward care : Mother Brigitta soon observed the trouble of her daughter ; and without the use of any great penetration, likewise guessed its cause. The talk about the re-ascending star of her former flax-negotiator, who was now celebrated as the pattern of an orderly, judicious, active tradesman, had not escaped her, any more than the feeling of the good Meta towards him ; and it was her opinion, that if he loved in earnest, it was needless to hang off so long, without explaining what he meant. Yet out of tenderness to her daughter, she let no hint of this discovery escape her ; till at length poor Meta's heart became so full, that of her own accord she made her mother the confidante of her sorrow, and

disclosed to her its true origin. The shrewd old lady learned little more by this disclosure than she knew already. But it afforded opportunity to mother and daughter for a full, fair and free discussion of this delicate affair. Brigitta made her no reproaches on the subject; she believed that what was done could not be undone; and directed all her eloquence to strengthen and encourage the dejected Meta to bear the failure of her hopes with a steadfast mind.

With this view, she spelt out to her the extremely reasonable moral, *a*, *b*, *ab*; discoursing thus; "My child, thou hast already said *a*, thou must now say *b* too; thou hast scorned thy fortune when it sought thee, now thou must submit when it will meet thee no longer. Experience has taught me, that the most confident Hope is the first to deceive us. Therefore, follow my example; abandon the fair cozener utterly, and thy peace of mind will no longer be disturbed by her. Count not on any improvement of thy fate; and thou wilt grow contented with thy present situation. Honour the spinning-wheel, which supports thee: what are fortune and riches to thee, when thou canst do without them?"

Close on this stout oration followed a loud humming symphony of snap-reel and spinning-wheel, to make up for the time lost in speaking. Mother Brigitta was in truth philosophising from the heart. After her scheme for the restoration of her former affluence had gone to ruin, she had so simplified the plan of her life, that Fate could not perplex it any more. But Meta was still far from this philosophical centre of indifference; and hence this doctrine, consolation and encouragement affected her quite otherwise than had been intended: the conscientious daughter now looked upon herself as the destroyer of her mother's fair hopes, and suffered from her own mind a thousand reproaches for this fault. Though she had never adopted the maternal scheme of marriage, and had reckoned only upon bread and salt in her future wedlock; yet, on hearing of her lover's riches and spreading commerce, her diet-project had directly mounted to six plates; and it

delighted her to think, that by her choice she should still realise her good mother's wish, and see her once more planted in her previous abundance.

This fair dream now vanished by degrees, as Franz continued silent. To make matters worse, there spread a rumour over all the city, that he was furnishing his house in the most splendid fashion for his marriage with a rich Antwerp lady, who was already on her way to Bremen. This Job's-news drove the lovely maiden from her last defence: she passed on the apostate sentence of banishment from her heart; and vowed from that hour never more to think of him; and as she did so, wetted the twining thread with her tears.

In a heavy hour she was breaking this vow, and thinking, against her will, of the faithless lover: for she had just spun off a rock of flax; and there was an old rhyme which had been taught her by her mother for encouragement to diligence:

'Spin, daughterkin, spin;
Thy sweetheart's within!'

which she always recollected when her rock was done; and along with it the memory of the Deceitful necessarily occurred to her. In this heavy hour, a finger rapped with a most dainty patter at the door. Mother Brigitta looked forth: the sweetheart was without. And who could it be? Who else but neighbour Franz, from the alley? He had decked himself with a gallant wooing-suit; and his well-dressed, thick brown locks shook forth perfume. This stately decoration boded, at all events, something else than flax-dealing. Mother Brigitta started in alarm; she tried to speak, but words failed her. Meta rose in trepidation from her seat, blushed like a purple rose, and was silent. Franz, however, had the power of utterance; to the soft *adagio* which he had in former days trilled forth to her, he now appended a suitable text, and explained his dumb love in clear words. Thereupon he made solemn application for her to the mother; justifying his proposal by the statement, that

the preparations in his house had been meant for the reception of a bride, and that this bride was the charming Meta.

The pointed old lady, having brought her feelings once more into equilibrium, was for protracting the affair to the customary term of eight days for deliberation; though joyful tears were running down her cheeks, presaging no impediment on her side, but rather answer of approval. Franz, however, was so pressing in his suit, that she fell upon a middle path between the wooer's ardour and maternal use and wont, and empowered the gentle Meta to decide in the affair according to her own good judgment. In the virgin heart there had occurred, since Franz's entrance, an important revolution. His presence here was the most speaking proof of his innocence; and as, in the course of conversation, it distinctly came to light, that his apparent coldness had been nothing else than zeal and diligence in putting his commercial affairs in order, and preparing what was necessary for the coming nuptials, it followed that the secret reconciliation would proceed forthwith without any stone of stumbling in its way. She acted with the outlaw, as Mother Brigitta with her disposted spinning gear, or the First-born Son of the Church with an exiled Parliament; recalled him with honour to her high-beating heart, and reinstated him in all his former rights and privileges there. The decisive three-lettered little word, that ratifies the happiness of love, came gliding with such unspeakable grace from her soft lips, that the answered lover could not help receiving it with a warm melting kiss.

The tender pair had now time and opportunity for deciphering all the hieroglyphics of their mysterious love; which afforded the most pleasant conversation that ever two lovers carried on. They found, what our commentators ought to pray for, that they had always understood and interpreted the text aright, without once missing the true sense of their reciprocal proceedings. It cost the delighted bridegroom almost as great an effort to part from his charming bride, as on the day when

he set out on his crusade to Antwerp. However, he had an important walk to take; so at last it became time to withdraw.

This walk was directed to the Weser-bridge, to find Timbertoe, whom he had not forgotten, though he had long delayed to keep his word to him. Sharply as the physiognomist, ever since his interview with the open-handed Bridge-bailiff, had been on the outlook, he could never catch a glimpse of him among the passengers, although a second visit had been faithfully promised. Yet the figure of his benefactor had not vanished from his memory. The moment he perceived the fair-apparelled youth from a distance, he stilted towards him, and gave him kindly welcome. Franz answered his salutation, and said: "Friend, canst thou take a walk with me into the Neustadt, to transact a small affair? Thy trouble shall not be unpaid."

"Ah; why not?" replied the old blade; "though I have a wooden leg, I can step you with it as stoutly as the lame dwarf that crept round the city-common;[1] for the wooden leg, you must know, has this good property, it never tires. But excuse me a little while till Graycloak is come: he never misses to pass along the Bridge between day and night."

"What of Graycloak?" inquired Franz: "let me know about him."

"Graycloak brings me daily about nightfall a silver groschen, I know not from whom. It is of no use prying into things, so I never mind. Sometimes it occurs to me Graycloak must be the devil, and means to buy my soul with the money. But devil or no devil, what care I? I did not strike him on the bargain, so it cannot hold."

"I should not wonder," answered Franz, with a smile, "if Graycloak were a piece of a knave. But do thou follow me: the silver groschen shall not fail thee."

[1] There is an old tradition, that a neighbouring Countess promised in jest to give the Bremers as much land as a cripple, who was just asking her for alms, would creep round in a day. They took her at her word; and the cripple crawled so well, that the town obtained this large common by means of him.

Timbertoe set forth, hitched on briskly after his guide, who conducted him up one street and down another, to a distant quarter of the city, near the wall; then halted before a neat little new-built house, and knocked at the door. When it was opened: "Friend," said he, "thou madest one evening of my life cheerful; it is just that I should make the evening of thy life cheerful also. This house, with its appurtenances, and the garden where it stands, are thine; kitchen and cellar are full; an attendant is appointed to wait upon thee; and the silver groschen, over and above, thou wilt find every noon lying under thy plate. Nor will I hide from thee that Graycloak was my servant, whom I sent to give thee daily an honourable alms, till I had got this house made ready for thee. If thou like, thou mayest reckon me thy proper Guardian Angel, since the other has not acted to thy satisfaction."

He then led the old man into his dwelling, where the table was standing covered, and everything arranged for his convenience and comfortable living. The grayhead was so astonished at his fortune, that he could not understand or even believe it. That a rich man should take such pity on a poor one, was incomprehensible: he felt disposed to take the whole affair for magic or jugglery, till Franz removed his doubts. A stream of thankful tears flowed down the old man's cheeks; and his benefactor, satisfied with this, did not wait till he should recover from his amazement and thank him in words, but, after doing this angel-message, vanished from the old man's eyes, as angels are wont; and left him to piece together the affair as he best could.

Next morning, in the habitation of the lovely Meta, all was as a fair. Franz despatched to her a crowd of merchants, jewellers, milliners, lace-dealers, tailors, sutors and sempstresses, in part to offer her all sorts of wares, in part their own good services. She passed the whole day in choosing stuffs, laces and other requisites for the condition of a bride, or being measured for her various new apparel. The dimensions of her

dainty foot, her beautifully-formed arm and her slim waist, were as often and as carefully meted, as if some skilful statuary had been taking from her the model for a Goddess of Love. Meanwhile the bridegroom went to appoint the bans; and before three weeks were past, he led his bride to the altar, with a solemnity by which even the gorgeous wedding pomp of the Hop-King was eclipsed. Mother Brigitta had the happiness of twisting the bridal-garland for her virtuous Meta; she completely attained her wish of spending her woman's-summer in propitious affluence; and deserved this satisfaction, as a recompense for one praiseworthy quality which she possessed: She was the most tolerable mother-in-law that has ever been discovered.

LIBUSSA[1]

Deep in the Bohemian forest, which has now dwindled to a few scattered woodlands, there abode, in the primeval times, while it stretched its umbrage far and wide, a spiritual race of beings, airy and avoiding light, incorporeal also, more delicately fashioned than the clay-formed sons of men; to the coarser sense of feeling imperceptible, but to the finer, half-visible by moonlight; and well known to poets by the name of Dryads, and to ancient bards by that of Elves. From immemorial ages, they had dwelt here undisturbed; till all at once the forest sounded with the din of warriors, for Duke Czech of Hungary, with his Sclavonic hordes, had broken over the mountains, to seek in these wild tracts a new habitation. The fair tenants of the aged oaks, of the rocks, clefts and grottos, and of the flags in the tarns and morasses, fled before the clang of arms and the neighing of chargers: the stout Erl-King himself was annoyed by the uproar, and transferred his court to more sequestered wildernesses. One solitary Elf could not resolve to leave her darling oak; and as the wood began here and there to be felled for the purposes of cultivation, she alone undertook to defend her tree against the violence of the strangers, and chose the towering summit of it for her residence.

Among the retinue of the Duke was a young Squire, Krokus by name, full of spirit and impetuosity; stout and handsome, and of noble mien, to whom the keeping of his master's stud had been intrusted, which at times he drove far

[1] From *Jo. Dubravii Historia Bohemica*, and *Æneæ Sylvii Cardinalis de Bohemarum Origine ac Gestis Historia.*

into the forest for their pasture. Frequently he rested beneath the oak which the Elf inhabited: she observed him with satisfaction; and at night, when he was sleeping at the root, she would whisper pleasant dreams into his ear, and announce to him in expressive images the events of the coming day. When any horse had strayed into the desert, and the keeper had lost its track, and gone to sleep with anxious thoughts, he failed not to see in vision the marks of the hidden path, which led him to the spot where his lost steed was grazing.

The farther the new colonists extended, the nearer came they to the dwelling of the Elf; and as by her gift of divination, she perceived how soon her life-tree would be threatened by the axe, she determined to unfold this sorrow to her guest. One moonshiny summer evening, Krokus had folded his herd somewhat later than usual, and was hastening to his bed under the lofty oak. His path led him round a little fishy lake on whose silver face the moon was imaging herself like a gleaming ball of gold; and across this glittering portion of the water, on the farther side, he perceived a female form, apparently engaged in walking by the cool shore. This sight surprised the young warrior: What brings the maiden hither, thought he, by herself, in this wilderness, at the season of the nightly dusk? Yet the adventure was of such a sort, that, to a young man, the more strict investigation of it seemed alluring rather than alarming. He redoubled his steps, keeping firmly in view the form which had arrested his attention; and soon reached the place where he had first noticed it, beneath the oak. But now it looked to him as if the thing he saw were a shadow rather than a body; he stood wondering and motionless, a cold shudder crept over him, and he heard a sweet soft voice address to him these words: "Come hither, beloved stranger, and fear not; I am no phantasm, no deceitful shadow: I am the Elf of this grove, the tenant of the oak, under whose leafy boughs thou hast often rested. I rocked thee in sweet delighting dreams, and prefigured to thee thy adventures; and when a brood-mare or

a foal had chanced to wander from the herd, I told thee of the place where thou wouldst find it. Repay this favour by a service which I now require of thee; be the Protector of this tree, which has so often screened thee from the shower and the scorching heat; and guard the murderous axes of thy brethren, which lay waste the forest, that they harm not this venerable trunk."

The young warrior, restored to self-possession by this soft still voice, made answer: "Goddess or mortal, whoever thou mayest be, require of me what thou pleasest; if I can, I will perform it. But I am a man of no account among my people, the servant of the Duke my lord. If he tell me to-day or tomorrow, Feed here, feed there, how shall I protect thy tree in this distant forest? Yet if thou commandest me, I will renounce the service of princes, and dwell under the shadow of thy oak, and guard it while I live."

"Do so," said the Elf: "thou shalt not repent it."

Hereupon she vanished; and there was a rustling in the branches above, as if some breath of an evening breeze had been entangled in them, and had stirred the leaves. Krokus, for a while, stood enraptured at the heavenly form which had appeared to him. So soft a female, of such slender shape and royal bearing, he had never seen among the short squat damsels of his own Sclavonic race. At last he stretched himself upon the moss, but no sleep descended on his eyes; the dawn overtook him in a whirl of sweet emotions, which were as strange and new to him as the first beam of light to the opened eye of one born blind. With the earliest morning he hastened to the Court of the Duke, required his discharge, packed up his war-accoutrements, and, with rapid steps, his burden on his shoulders, and his head full of glowing enthusiasm, hied him back to his enchanted forest-hermitage.

Meanwhile, in his absence, a craftsman among the people, a miller by trade, had selected for himself the round straight trunk of the oak to be an axle, and was proceeding with his

mill-men to fell it. The affrighted Elf sobbed bitterly, as the greedy saw began with iron tooth to devour the foundations of her dwelling. She looked wildly round, from the highest summit, for her faithful guardian, but her glance could find him nowhere; and the gift of prophecy, peculiar to her race, was in the present case so ineffectual, that she could as little read the fate that stood before her, as the sons of Æsculapius, with their vaunted prognosis, can discover ways and means for themselves when Death is knocking at their own door.

Krokus, however, was approaching, and so near the scene of this catastrophe, that the screeching of the busy saw did not escape his ear. Such a sound in the forest boded no good: he quickened his steps, and beheld before his eyes the horror of the devastation that was visiting the tree which he had taken under his protection. Like a fury he rushed upon the wood-cutters, with pike and sword, and scared them from their work; for they concluded he must be a forest-demon, and fled in great precipitation. By good fortune, the wound of the tree was still curable; and the scar of it disappeared in a few summers.

In the solemn hour of evening, when the stranger had fixed upon the spot for his future habitation; had meted out the space for hedging round as a garden, and was weighing in his mind the whole scheme of his future hermitage; where, in retirement from the society of men, he purposed to pass his days in the service of a shadowy companion, possessed apparently of little more reality than a Saint of the Calendar, whom a pious friar chooses for his spiritual paramour—the Elf appeared before him at the brink of the lake, and with gentle looks thus spoke:

"Thanks to thee, beloved stranger, that thou hast turned away the wasteful arms of thy brethren from ruining this tree, with which my life is united. For thou shalt know that Mother Nature, who has granted to my race such varied powers and influences, has combined the fortune of our life

with the growth and duration of the oak. By us the sovereign of the forest raises his venerable head above the populace of other trees and shrubs; we further the circulation of the sap through his trunk and boughs, that he may gain strength to battle with the tempest, and for long centuries to defy destructive Time. On the other hand, our life is bound to his: when the oak, which the lot of Destiny has appointed for the partner of our existence, fades by years, we fade along with him; and when he dies, we die, and sleep, like mortals, as it were a sort of death-sleep, till, by the everlasting cycle of things, Chance, or some hidden provision of Nature, again weds our being to a new germ; which, unfolded by our enlivening virtue, after the lapse of long years, springs up to be a mighty tree, and affords us the enjoyment of existence anew. From this thou mayest perceive what a service thou hast done me by thy help, and what gratitude I owe thee. Ask of me the recompense of thy noble deed; disclose to me the wish of thy heart, and this hour it shall be granted thee."

Krokus continued silent. The sight of the enchanting Elf had made more impression on him than her speech, of which, indeed, he understood but little. She noticed his embarrassment; and, to extricate him from it, plucked a withered reed from the margin of the lake, broke it into three pieces, and said: "Choose one of these three stalks, or take one without a choice. In the first, lie Honour and Renown; in the second, Riches and the wise enjoyment of them; in the third is happiness in Love laid up for thee."

The young man cast his eyes upon the ground, and answered: "Daughter of Heaven, if thou wouldst deign to grant the desire of my heart, know that it lies not in these three stalks which thou offerest me; the recompense I aim at is higher. What is Honour but the fuel of Pride? what are Riches but the root of Avarice? and what is Love but the trap-door of Passion, to ensnare the noble freedom of the heart? Grant me my wish, to rest under the shadow of thy

oak-tree from the toils of warfare, and to hear from thy sweet mouth the lessons of wisdom, that I may understand by them the secrets of the future."

"Thy request," replied the Elf, "is great; but thy deserving towards me is not less so: be it then as thou hast asked. Nor, with the fruit, shall the shell be wanting to thee; for the wise man is also honoured; he alone is rich, for he desires nothing more than he needs, and he tastes the pure nectar of Love without poisoning it by polluted lips."

So saying, she again presented to him the three reed-stalks, and vanished from his sight.

The young Eremite prepared his bed of moss, beneath the oak, exceedingly content with the reception which the Elf had given him. Sleep came upon him like a strong man; gay morning dreams danced round his head, and solaced his fancy with the breath of happy forebodings. On awakening, he joyfully began his day's work; ere long he had built himself a pleasant hermit's-cottage; had dug his garden, and planted in it roses and lilies, with other odoriferous flowers and herbs; not forgetting pulse and cole, and a sufficiency of fruit-trees. The Elf never failed to visit him at twilight; she rejoiced in the prospering of his labours; walked with him, hand in hand, by the sedgy border of the lake; and the wavering reeds, as the wind passed through them, whispered a melodious evening salutation to the trustful pair. She instructed her attentive disciple in the secrets of Nature; showed him the origin and cause of things; taught him their common and their magic properties and effects; and formed the rude soldier into a thinker and philosopher.

In proportion as the feelings and senses of the young man grew refined by this fair spiritual intercourse, it seemed as if the tender form of the Elf were condensing, and acquiring more consistency; her bosom caught warmth and life; her brown eyes sparkled with the fire of love; and with the shape, she appeared to have adopted the feelings of a young

blooming maiden. The sentimental hour of dusk, which is as if expressly calculated to awaken slumbering feelings, had its usual effect; and after a few moons from their first acquaintance, the sighing Krokus found himself possessed of the happiness in Love, which the Third Reed-stalk had appointed him; and did not repent that by the trap-door of Passion the freedom of his heart had been ensnared. Though the marriage of the tender pair took place without witnesses, it was celebrated with as much enjoyment as the most tumultuous espousals; nor were speaking proofs of love's recompense long wanting. The Elf gave her husband three daughters at a birth; and the father, rejoicing in the bounty of his better half, named, at the first embrace, the eldest infant, Bela; the next born, Therba; and the youngest, Libussa. They were all like the Genies in beauty of form; and though not moulded of such light materials as the mother, their corporeal structure was finer than the dull earthy clay of the father. They were also free from all the infirmities of childhood; their swathings did not gall them; they teethed without epileptic fits, needed no calomel taken inwardly, got no rickets; had no small-pox, and, of course, no scars, no scum-eyes, or puckered faces: nor did they require any leading-strings; for after the first nine days, they ran like little partridges; and as they grew up, they manifested all the talents of the mother for discovering hidden things, and predicting what was future.

Krokus himself, by the aid of time, grew skilful in these mysteries also. When the wolf had scattered the flocks through the forest, and the herdsmen were seeking for their sheep and horses; when the woodman missed an axe or bill, they took counsel from the wise Krokus, who showed them where to find what they had lost. When a wicked prowler had abstracted aught from the common stock; had by night broken into the pinfold, or the dwelling of his neighbour, and robbed or slain him, and none could guess the malefactor, the wise Krokus was consulted. He led the people to a

green; made them form a ring; then stept into the midst of them, set the faithful sieve a-running, and so failed not to discover the misdoer. By such acts his fame spread over all the country of Bohemia; and whoever had a weighty care, or an important undertaking, took counsel from the wise Krokus about its issue. The lame and the sick, too, required from him help and recovery; even the unsound cattle of the fold were driven to him; and his gift of curing sick kine by his shadow, was not less than that of the renowned St. Martin of Schierbach. By these means the concourse of the people to him grew more frequent, day by day, no otherwise than if the Tripod of the Delphic Apollo had been transferred to the Bohemian forest: and though Krokus answered all inquiries, and cured the sick and afflicted, without fee or reward, yet the treasure of his secret wisdom paid him richly, and brought him in abundant profit; the people crowded to him with gifts and presents, and almost oppressed him with testimonies of their good-will. It was he that first disclosed the mystery of washing gold from the sands of the Elbe; and for his recompense he had a tenth of all the produce. By these means his wealth and store increased; he built strongholds and palaces; had vast herds of cattle; possessed fertile pasturages, fields and woods; and thus found himself imperceptibly possessed of all the Riches which the beneficently foreboding Elf had enclosed for him in the Second Reed.

One fine summer evening, when Krokus with his train was returning from an excursion, having by special request been settling the disputed marches of two townships, he perceived his spouse on the margin of the sedgy lake, where she had first appeared to him. She waved him with her hand; so he dismissed his servants, and hastened to clasp her in his arms. She received him, as usual, with tender love; but her heart was sad and oppressed; from her eyes trickled down ethereal tears, so fine and fugitive, that as they fell they were greedily inhaled by the air, and not allowed to reach the ground.

Krokus was alarmed at this appearance; he had never seen his wife's fair eyes otherwise than cheerful, and sparkling with youthful gaiety. "What ails thee, beloved of my heart?" said he; "black forebodings overcast my soul. Speak, say what mean those tears."

The Elf sobbed, leaned her head sorrowfully on his shoulder, and said: "Beloved husband, in thy absence I have looked into the Book of Destiny; a doleful chance overhangs my life-tree; I must part from thee forever. Follow me into the Castle, till I bless my children; for from this day you will never see me more."

"Dearest wife," said Krokus, "chase away these mournful thoughts. What misfortune is it that can harm thy tree? Behold its sound boughs, how they stretch forth loaded with fruit and leaves, and how it raises its top to the clouds. While this arm can move, it shall defend thy tree from any miscreant that presumes to wound its stem."

"Impotent defence," replied she, "which a mortal arm can yield! Ants can but secure themselves from ants, flies from flies, and the worms of Earth from other earthly worms. But what can the mightiest among you do against the workings of Nature, or the unalterable decisions of Fate? The kings of the Earth can heap up little hillocks, which they name fortresses and castles; but the weakest breath of air defies their authority, blows where it lists, and mocks at their command. This oak-tree thou hast guarded from the violence of men; canst thou likewise forbid the tempest that it rise not to disleaf its branches; or if a hidden worm is gnawing in its marrow, canst thou draw it out, and tread it under foot?"

Amid such conversation they arrived at the Castle. The slender maidens, as they were wont at the evening visit of their mother, came bounding forth to meet them; gave account of their day's employments, produced their needlework, and their embroideries, to prove their diligence: but

now the hour of household happiness was joyless. They soon observed that the traces of deep suffering were imprinted on the countenance of their father; and they looked with sympathising sorrow at their mother's tears, without venturing to inquire their cause. The mother gave them many wise instructions and wholesome admonitions; but her speech was like the singing of a swan, as if she wished to give the world her farewell. She lingered with her husband, till the morning-star went up in the sky; then she embraced him and her children with mournful tenderness; and at dawn of day retired, as was her custom, through the secret door, to her oak-tree, and left her friends to their own sad forebodings.

Nature stood in listening stillness at the rising sun; but heavy black clouds soon veiled his beaming head. The day grew sultry and oppressive; the whole atmosphere was electric. Distant thunder came rolling over the forest; and the hundred-voiced Echo repeated, in the winding valleys, its baleful sound. At the noontide, a forked thunderbolt struck quivering down upon the oak; and in a moment shivered with resistless force the trunk and boughs, and the wreck lay scattered far around it in the forest. When Father Krokus was informed of this, he rent his garments, went forth with his daughters to deplore the life-tree of his spouse, and to collect the fragments of it, and preserve them as invaluable relics. But the Elf from that day was not seen any more.

In some few years, the tender girls had waxed in stature; their maiden forms blossomed forth, as the rose pushing up from the bud; and the fame of their beauty spread abroad over all the land. The noblest youths of the people crowded round, with cases to submit to Father Krokus for his counsel; but at bottom, these their specious pretexts were directed to the fair maidens, whom they wished to get a glimpse of; as is the mode with young men, who delight to have some business with the master of the household, when his daughters

are beautiful. The three sisters lived in great simplicity and unity together; as yet but little conscious of their talents. The gift of prophecy had been communicated to them in an equal degree; and all their words were oracles, although they knew it not. Yet soon their vanity awoke at the voice of flattery; word-catchers eagerly laid hold of every sound proceeding from their lips; Celadons noted down every look, spied out the faintest smile, explored the aspect of their eyes, and drew from it more or lest favourable prognostics, conceiving that their own destiny was to be read by means of it; and from this time, it has become the mode with lovers to deduce from the horoscope of the eyes the rising or declining of their star in courtship. Scarcely had Vanity obtained a footing in the virgin heart, till Pride, her dear confidante, with her wicked rabble of a train, Self-love, Self-praise, Self-will, Self-interest, were standing at the door; and all of them in time sneaked in. The elder sisters struggled to outdo the younger in their arts; and envied her in secret her superiority in personal attractions. For though they all were very beautiful, the youngest was the most so. Fräulein Bela turned her chief attention to the science of plants; as Fräulein Medea did in earlier times. She knew their hidden virtues, could extract from them poisons and antidótes; and farther, understood the art of making from them sweet or nauseous odours for the unseen Powers. When her censer steamed, she allured to her Spirits out of the immeasurable depth of æther, from beyond the Moon, and they became her subjects, that with their fine organs they might be allowed to snuff these delicious vapours: and when she scattered villainous perfumes upon the coals, she could have smoked away with it the very Zihim and the Ohim from the Wilderness.

Fräulein Therba was inventive as Circe in devising magic formulas, which could command the elements, could raise tempests and whirlwinds, also hail and thunder; could shake the bowels of the Earth, or lift itself from the sockets of its axle. She employed these arts to terrify the people, and be

feared and honoured by them as a goddess; and she could, in fact, arrange the weather more according to the wish and taste of men than wise old Nature does. Two brothers quarrelled on this subject, for their wishes never were the same. The one was a husbandman, and still desired rain for the growth and strengthening of his crops. The other was a potter, and desired constant sunshine to dry his dishes, which the rain destroyed. And as Heaven never could content them in disposing of this matter, they repaired one day with rich presents to the Castle of the wise Krokus; and submitted their petitions to Therba. The daughter of the Elf gave a smile over their unquiet grumbling at the wise economy of Nature; and contented the demands of each: she made rain fall on the seed-lands of the cultivator; and the sun shone on the potter-field close by. By these enchantments both the sisters gained much fame and riches, for they never used their gifts without a fee. With their treasures they built castles and country-houses; laid out royal pleasure-gardens; to their festivals and divertisements there was no end. The gallants, who solicited their love, they gulled and laughed at.

Fräulein Libussa was no sharer in the vain proud disposition of her sisters. Though she had the same capacities for penetrating the secrets of Nature, and employing its hidden powers in her service, she remained contented with the gifts she had derived from her maternal inheritance, without attempting to increase them, or turn them to a source of gain. Her vanity extended not beyond the consciousness that she was beautiful; she cared not for riches; and neither longed to be feared nor to be honoured like her sisters. Whilst these were gadding up and down among their country-houses, hastening from one tumultuous pleasure to another, with the flower of the Bohemian chivalry fettered to their chariot-wheels, she abode in her father's house, conducting the economy, giving counsel to those who begged it, friendly help to the afflicted and oppressed; and all from good-will,

without remuneration.[1] Her temper was soft and modest, and her conduct virtuous and discreet, as beseems a noble virgin. She might secretly rejoice in the victories which her beauty gained over the hearts of men, and accept the sighing and cooing of her languishing adorers as a just tribute to her charms; but none dared speak a word of love to her, or venture on aspiring to her heart. Yet Amor, the roguish urchin, takes a pleasure in exerting his privileges on the coy; and often hurls his burning torch upon the lowly straw roof, when he means to set on fire a lofty palace.

Far in the bosom of the forest lived an ancient Knight, who had come into the land with the host of Czech. In this seclusion he had fixed his settlement; reduced the desert under cultivation, and formed for himself a small estate, where he thought to pass the remainder of his days in peace, and live upon the produce of his husbandry. A strong-handed neighbour took forcible possession of the land, and expelled the owner, whom a hospitable peasant sheltered in his dwelling. The distressed old Knight had a son, who now formed the sole consolation and support of his age; a bold active youth, but possessed of nothing save a hunting-spear and a practised arm, for the sustenance of his grey-haired father. The injustice of their neighbour stimulated him to revenge, and he had been prepared for resisting force by force; but the command of the anxious father, unwilling to expose his son to danger, had disarmed him. Yet ere long he re-

[1] *Nulla Crocco virilis sexûs proles fuit, sed moriturus tres a morte suâ filias superstites reliquit, omnes ut ipse erat fatidicas, vel magas potius, qualis Medea et Circe fuerant. Nam Bela natu filiarum maxima herbis incantandis Medeam imitabatur, Tetcha* (*Therba*) *natu minor carminibus magicis Circem reddebat. Ad utramque frequens multitudinis concursus; dum alii amores sibi conciliare, alii cum bonâ valetudine in gratiam redire, alii res amissas recuperare cupiunt. Illa arcem Belinam, hæc altera arcem Thetin ex mercenariâ pecuniâ, nihil enim gratuito faciebant, ædificandam curavit. Liberalior in hac re Lybussa natu minima apparuit, ut quæ a nemine quidquam extorquebat, et potius fata publica omnibus, quam privata singulis, præcinebat: quâ liberalitate, et quia non gratuitâ solùm sed etiam minus fallace prædictione utebatur, assecuta est ut in locum patris Crocci subrogaretur.*—Dubravius.

sumed his former purpose. Then the father called him to his presence, and said :

" Pass over, my son, to the wise Krokus, or to the cunning virgins his daughters, and ask counsel whether the gods approve thy undertaking, and will grant it a prosperous issue. If so, gird on thy sword, and take the spear in thy hand, and go forth to fight for thy inheritance. If not, stay here till thou hast closed my eyes and laid me in the earth ; then do what shall seem good to thee."

The youth set forth, and first reached Bela's palace, a building like a temple for the habitation of a goddess. He knocked at the door, and desired to be admitted ; but the porter observing that he came empty-handed, dismissed him as a beggar, and shut the door in his face. He went forward in sadness, and reached the house of Sister Therba, where he knocked and requested an audience. The porter looked upon him through his window, and said : " If thou bringest gold in thy bag, which thou canst weigh out to my mistress, she will teach thee one of her good saws to read thy fortune withal. If not, then go and gather of it in the sands of the Elbe as many grains as the tree hath leaves, the sheaf ears, and the bird feathers, then will I open thee this gate." The mocked young man glided off entirely dejected ; and the more so, as he learned that Seer Krokus was in Poland, arbitrating the disputes of some contending Grandees. He anticipated from the third sister no more flattering reception ; and as he descried her father's castle from a hill in the distance, he could not venture to approach it, but hid himself in a thicket to pursue his bitter thoughts. Ere long he was roused by an approaching noise ; he listened, and heard a sound of horses' hoofs. A flying roe dashed through the bushes, followed by a lovely huntress and her maids on stately steeds. She hurled a javelin from her hand ; it flew whizzing through the air, but did not hit the game. Instantly the watchful young man seized his bow and launched from the twanging cord a bolt, which smote the deer through the heart, and stretched it lifeless on

the spot. The lady, in astonishment at this phenomenon, looked round to find her unknown hunting partner: and the archer, on observing this, stept forward from his bush, and bent himself humbly before her to the ground. Fräulein Libussa thought she had never seen a finer man. At the first glance, his figure made so deep an impression on her, that she could not but award him that involuntary feeling of good-will which a beautiful appearance claims as its prerogative. "Tell me, fair stranger," said she to him, "who art thou, and what chance is it that leads thee to these groves?" The youth guessed rightly that his lucky star had brought him what he was in search of; he disclosed his case to her in modest words; not hiding how disgracefully her sisters had dismissed him, or how the treatment had afflicted him. She cheered his heart with friendly words. "Follow me to my abode," said she; "I will consult the Book of Fate for thee, and answer thy demand tomorrow by the rising of the sun."

The young man did as he was ordered. No churlish porter here barred for him the entrance of the palace; the fair lady exercised the rights of hospitality with generous attention. He was charmed by this benignant reception, but still more by the beauty of his gentle hostess. Her enchanting figure hovered all night before his eyes; he carefully defended himself from sleep, that he might not for a moment lose from his thoughts the delightful events of the day. Fräulein Libussa, on the contrary, enjoyed soft slumber: for seclusion from the influences of the external senses, which disturb the finer presentiments of the future, is an indispensable condition for the gift of prophecy. The glowing fancy of the maiden blended the form of this young stranger with all the dreaming images which hovered through her mind that night. She found him where she had not looked for him, in connexion with affairs in which she could not understand how this unknown youth had come to be involved.

On her early awakening, at the hour when the fair pro-

phetess was wont to separate and interpret the visions of the night, she felt inclined to cast away these phantasms from her mind, as errors which had sprung from a disturbance in the operation of her prophetic faculty, and were entitled to no heed from her. Yet a dim feeling signified that this creation of her fancy was not idle dreaming; but had a significant allusion to certain events which the future would unravel; and that last night this presaging Fantasy had spied out the decrees of Fate, and blabbed them to her, more successfully than ever. By help of it, she found that her guest was inflamed with warm love to her; and with equal honesty her heart confessed the same thing in regard to him. But she instantly impressed the seal of silence on the news; as the modest youth had, on his side, set a guard upon his lips and his eyes, that he might not expose himself to a contemptuous refusal; for the chasm which Fortune had interposed between him and the daughter of the wise Krokus seemed impassable.

Although the fair Libussa well knew what she had to say in answer to the young man's question, yet it went against her heart to let him go from her so soon. At sunrise she called him to her in her garden, and said: "The curtain of darkness yet hangs before my eyes; abide with me till sunset"; and at night she said: "Stay till sunrise"; and next morning: "Wait another day"; and the third day: "Have patience till tomorrow." On the fourth day she at last dismissed him; finding no more pretexts for detaining him, with safety to her secret. At parting, she gave him his response in friendly words: "The gods will not that thou shouldst contend with a man of violence in the land; to bear and suffer is the lot of the weaker. Return to thy father; be the comfort of his old age; and support him by the labour of thy diligent hand. Take two white Steers as a present from my herd; and this Staff to drive them; and when it blossoms and bears fruit, the spirit of prophecy will descend on thee."

The young man felt himself unworthy of the gentle virgin's gift; and blushed that he should receive it and make no return. With ineloquent lips, but with looks so much the more eloquent, he took mournful leave of her; and at the gate below found two white Steers awaiting him, as sleek and glittering as of old the godlike Bull, on whose smooth back the virgin Europa swam across the blue sea waves. Joyfully he loosed them from the post, and drove them softly on before him. The distance home seemed but a few ells, so much was his spirit busied with the fair Libussa: and he vowed, that as he never could obtain her love, he would love no other all his days. The old Knight rejoiced in the return of his son; and still more in learning that the oracle of the fair heiress agreed so completely with his own wishes. As husbandry had been appointed by the gods for the young man's trade, he lingered not in harnessing his white Steers, and yoking them to the plough. The first trial prospered to his wish: the bullocks had such strength and alacrity that they turned over in a single day more land than twelve yoke of oxen commonly can master: for they were fiery and impetuous, as the Bull is painted in the Almanac, where he rushes from the clouds in the sign of April; not sluggish and heavy like the Ox, who plods on with his holy consorts, in our Gospel-Book, phlegmatically, as a Dutch skipper in a calm.

Duke Czech, who had led the first colony of his people into Bohemia, was now long ago committed to his final rest, yet his descendants had not been promoted to succeed him in his princely dignity. The magnates had in truth, at his decease, assembled for a new election; but their wild stormy tempers would admit of no reasonable resolution. Self-interest and self-sufficiency transformed the first Bohemian Convention of Estates into a Polish Diet: as too many hands laid hold of the princely mantle, they tore it in pieces, and no one of them obtained it. The government had dwindled to a sort of Anarchy; every one did what was right in his own eyes; the strong oppressed the weak, the rich the poor, the great

the little. There was now no public security in the land; yet the frank spirits of the time thought their new republic very well arranged: "All is in order," said they, "everything goes on its way with us as well as elsewhere; the wolf eats the lamb, the kite the dove, the fox the cock." This artless constitution could not last; when the first debauch of fancied freedom had gone off, and the people were again grown sober, reason asserted its rights; the patriots, the honest citizens, whoever in the nation loved his country, joined together to destroy the idol Hydra, and unite the people once more under a single head. "Let us choose a Prince," said they, "to rule over us, after the manner of our fathers, to tame the froward, and exercise right and justice in the midst of us. Not the strongest, the boldest, or the richest; the wisest be our Duke!" The people, wearied out with the oppressions of their petty tyrants, had on this occasion but one voice, and loudly applauded the proposal. A meeting of Estates was convoked; and the choice unanimously fell upon the wise Krokus. An embassy of honour was appointed, inviting him to take possession of the princely dignity. Though he had never longed for lofty titles, he hesitated not about complying with the people's wish. Invested with the purple, he proceeded, with great pomp, to Vizegrad, the residence of the Dukes; where the people met him with triumphant shouting, and did reverence to him as their Regent. Whereby he perceived, that now the third Reed-stalk of the bountiful Elf was likewise sending forth its gift upon him.

His love of justice, and his wise legislation, soon spread his fame over all the surrounding countries. The Sarmatic Princes, incessantly at feud with one another, brought their contention from afar before his judgment-seat. He weighed it with the undeceitful weights of natural Justice, in the scales of Law; and when he opened his mouth, it was as if the venerable Solon, or the wise Solomon from between the Twelve Lions of his throne, had been pronouncing sentence. Some seditious instigators having leagued against the peace of

their country, and kindled war among the Poles, he advanced at the head of his army into Poland; put an end to the civil strife; and a large portion of the people, grateful for the peace which he had given them, chose him for their Duke also. He there built the city Cracow, which is called by his name, and has the privilege of crowning the Polish Kings, even to the present time. Krokus ruled with great glory to the end of his days. Observing that he was now near their limit, and must soon set out, he caused a coffin to be made from the fragments of the oak which his spouse the Elf had inhabited; and then departed in peace, bewept by the Princesses his three daughters, who deposited the Ducal remains in the coffin, and consigned him to the Earth as he had commanded; and the whole land mourned for him.

When the obsequies were finished, the Estates assembled to deliberate who should now possess the vacant throne. The people were unanimous for one of Krokus's daughters; but which of the three they had not yet determined. Fräulein Bela had, on the whole, the fewest adherents; for her heart was not good; and her magic-lantern was too frequently employed in doing sheer mischief. But she had raised such a terror of herself among the people, that no one liked to take exception at her, lest he might draw down her vengeance on him. When the vote was called, therefore, the Electors all continued dumb; there was no voice for her, but also none against her. At sunset the representatives of the people separated, adjourning their election to another day. Then Fräulein Therba was proposed: but confidence in her incantations had made Fraulein Therba's head giddy; she was proud and overbearing; required to be honoured as a goddess; and if incense did not always smoke for her, she grew peevish, cross, capricious; displaying all the properties by which the fair sex, when they please, can cease to be fair. She was less feared than her elder sister, but not on that account more loved. For these reasons, the election-field continued silent as a lykewake; and the vote was never called for. On the

third day came Libussa's turn. No sooner was this name pronounced, than a confidential hum was heard throughout the electing circle; the solemn visages unwrinkled and brightened up, and each of the Electors had some good to whisper of the Fräulein to his neighbour. One praised her virtue, another praised her modesty, a third her prudence, a fourth her infallibility in prophecy, a fifth her disinterestedness in giving counsel, a tenth her chastity, other ninety her beauty, and the last her gifts as a housewife. When a lover draws out such a catalogue of the perfections of his mistress, it remains still doubtful whether she is really the possessor of a single one among them; but the public seldom errs on the favourable side, however often on the other, in the judgments it pronounces on good fame. With so many universally acknowledged praiseworthy qualities, Fräulein Libussa was undoubtedly the favoured candidate, at least *in petto*, of the sage Electors: but the preference of the younger sister to the elder has so frequently, in the affair of marriage, as experience testifies, destroyed the peace of the house, that reasonable fear might be entertained lest in affairs of still greater moment it might disturb the peace of the country. This consideration put the sapient guardians of the people into such embarrassment, that they could come to no conclusion whatever. There was wanting a speaker, to hang the clock-weight of his eloquence upon the wheel of the Electors' favourable will, before the business could get into motion, and the good disposition of their minds become active and efficient; and this speaker now appeared, as if appointed for the business.

Wladomir, one of the Bohemian Magnates, the highest after the Duke, had long sighed for the enchanting Libussa, and wooed her during Father Krokus's lifetime. The youth being one of his most faithful vassals, and beloved by him as a son, the worthy Krokus could have wished well that love would unite this pair; but the coyness of the maiden was insuperable, and he would in nowise force her inclination. Prince Wladomir, however, would not be deterred by these doubtful

aspects; but still hoped, by fidelity and constancy, to tire out the hard heart of the Fräulein, and by his tender attentions make it soft and pliant. He continued in the Duke's retinue to the end, without appearing by this means to have advanced a hair's-breadth towards the goal of his desires. But now, he thought, an opportunity was offered him for opening her closed heart by a meritorious deed, and earning from her noble-minded gratitude what love did not seem inclined to grant him voluntarily. He determined on braving the hatred and vengeance of the two dreaded sisters, and raising his beloved to her paternal throne. Observing the indecision of the wavering assembly, he addressed them, and said:

"If ye will hear me, ye courageous Knights and Nobles from among the people, I will lay before you a similitude, by which you shall perceive how this coming choice may be accomplished to the weal and profit of the land."

Silence being ordered, he proceeded thus:

"The Bees had lost their Queen, and the whole hive sat sad and moping; they flew seldom and sluggishly out, had small heart or activity in honey-making, and their trade and sustenance fell into decay. Therefore they resolved upon a new sovereign, to rule over their community, that discipline and order might not be lost from among them. Then came the Wasp flying towards them, and said: 'Choose me for your Queen, I am mighty and terrible; the strong horse is afraid of my sting; with it I can even defy the lion, your hereditary foe, and prick him in the snout when he approaches your store: I will watch you and defend you.' This speech was pleasant to the Bees; but after deeply considering it, the wisest among them answered: 'Thou art stout and dreadful, but even the sting which is to guard us we fear: thou canst not be our Queen.' Then the Humble-bee came buzzing towards them, and said: 'Choose me for your Queen; hear ye not that the sounding of my wings announces loftiness and dignity? Nor is a sting wanting to me, wherewith to protect you.' The Bees answered: 'We are a peaceable and quiet

people; the proud sounding of thy wings would annoy us, and disturb the continuance of our diligence; thou canst not be our Queen.' Then the Royal-bee requested audience: 'Though I am larger and stronger than you,' said she, 'my strength cannot hurt or damage you; for, lo, the dangerous sting is altogether wanting. I am soft of temper, a friend of order and thrift, can guide your honey-making and further your labour.' 'Then,' said the Bees, 'thou art worthy to rule over us: we obey thee; be our Queen.'"

Wladomir was silent. The whole assembly guessed the meaning of his speech, and the minds of all were in a favourable tone for Fräulein Libussa. But at the moment when the vote was to be put, a croaking raven flew over their heads: this evil omen interrupted all deliberations, and the meeting was adjourned till the morrow. It was Fräulein Bela who had sent this bird of black augury to stop their operations, for she well knew how the minds of the Electors were inclining; and Prince Wladomir had raised her bitterest spleen against him. She held a secret consultation with her sister Therba; when it was determined to take vengeance on their common slanderer, and to despatch a heavy Incubus to suffocate the soul from his body. The stout Knight, dreaming nothing of this danger, went, as he was wont, to wait upon his mistress, and was favoured by her with the first friendly look; from which he failed not to presage for himself a heaven of delight; and if anything could still have increased his rapture, it must have been the gift of a rose, which was blooming on the Fräulein's breast, and which she reached him, with an injunction to let it wither on his heart. He interpreted these words quite otherwise than they were meant; for of all the sciences, there is none so deceitful as the science of expounding in matters of love: here errors, as it were, have their home. The enamoured Knight was anxious to preserve his rose as long as possible in freshness and bloom; he put it in a flower-pot among water, and fell asleep with the most flattering hopes.

At gloomy midnight, the destroying angel sent by Fräulein Bela glided towards him; with panting breath blew off the bolts and locks of his apartment; lighted like a mountain of lead upon the slumbering Knight, and so squeezed him together, that he felt on awakening as if a millstone had been hung about his neck. In this agonising suffocation, thinking that the last moment of his life was at hand, he happily remembered the rose, which was standing by his bed in a flower-pot, and pressed it to his breast, saying: "Wither with me, fair rose, and die on my chilled bosom, as a proof that my last thought was directed to thy gentle mistress." In an instant all was light about his heart; the heavy Incubus could not withstand the magic force of the flower; his crushing weight would not now have balanced a feather; his antipathy to the perfume soon scared him from the chamber; and the narcotic virtue of this rose-odour again lulled the Knight into refreshing sleep. He rose with the sun next morning, fresh and alert, and rode to the field to see what impression his similitude had made on the Electors, and to watch what course the business was about to take; determined at all hazards, should a contrary wind spring up, and threaten with shipwreck the vessel of his hopes, to lay his hand upon the rudder, and steer it into port.

For the present this was not required. The electing Senate had considered Wladomir's parable, and so sedulously ruminated and digested it overnight, that it had passed into their hearts and spirits. A stout Knight, who espied this favourable crisis, and who sympathised in the concerns of his heart with the enamoured Wladomir, was endeavouring to snatch away, or at least to share with him, the honour of exalting Fräulein Libussa to the throne. He stept forth, and drew his sword, and with a loud voice proclaimed Libussa Duchess of Bohemia, calling upon all who thought as he did, to draw their swords and justify the choice. In a moment hundreds of swords were gleaming through the field; a loud

huzza announced the new Regent, and on all sides arose the joyful shout: "Libussa be our Duchess!" A commission was appointed, with Wladomir and the stout sword-drawer at its head, to acquaint the Fräulein with her exaltation to the princely rank. With that modest blush, which gives the highest grace to female charms, she accepted the sovereignty over the people; and the magic of her enrapturing look made all hearts subject to her. The nation celebrated the event with vast rejoicings: and although her two sisters envied her, and employed their secret arts to obtain revenge on her and their country for the slight which had been put upon them, and endeavoured by the leaven of criticism, by censuring all the measures and transactions of their sister, to produce a hurtful fermentation in the state, yet Libussa was enabled wisely to encounter this unsisterly procedure, and to ruin all the hostile projects, magical or other, of these ungentle persons; till at last, weary of assailing her in vain, they ceased to employ their ineffectual arts against her.

The sighing Wladomir awaited, in the mean time, with wistful longing, the unfolding of his fate. More than once he had tried to read the final issue of it in the fair eyes of his Princess; but Libussa had enjoined them strict silence respecting the feelings of her heart; and for a lover, without prior treaty with the eyes and their significant glances, to demand an oral explanation, is at all times an unhappy undertaking. The only favourable sign, which still sustained his hopes, was the unfaded rose; for after a year had passed away, it still bloomed as fresh as on the night when he received it from her fair hand. A flower from a lady's hand, a nosegay, a ribbon, or a lock of hair, is certainly in all cases better than an empty nut; yet all these pretty things are but ambiguous pledges of love, if they have not borrowed meaning from some more trustworthy revelation. Wladomir had nothing for it but to play in silence the part of a sighing shepherd, and to watch what Time and Chance might in the long-run do to help him. The unquiet Mizisla pursued his

courtship with far more vivacity: he pressed forward on every occasion where he could obtain her notice. At the coronation, he had been the first that took the oath of fealty to the Princess; he followed her inseparably, as the Moon does the Earth, to express by unbidden offices of zeal his devotion to her person; and on public solemnities and processions, he flourished his sword before her, to keep its good services in her remembrance.

Yet Libussa seemed, like other people in the world, to have very speedily forgotten the promoters of her fortune; for when an obelisk is once standing perpendicular, one heeds not the levers and implements which raised it; so at least the claimants of her heart explained the Fräulein's coldness. Meanwhile both of them were wrong in their opinion: the Fräulein was neither insensible nor ungrateful; but her heart was no longer a free piece of property, which she could give or sell according to her pleasure. The decree of Love had already passed in favour of the trim Forester with the sure cross-bow. The first impression, which the sight of him had made upon her heart, was still so strong, that no second could efface it. In a period of three years, the colours of imagination, in which that Divinity had painted the image of the graceful youth, had no whit abated in their brightness; and love therefore continued altogether unimpaired. For the passion of the fair sex is of this nature, that if it can endure three moons, it will then last three times three years, or longer if required. In proof of this, see the instances occurring daily before our eyes. When the heroes of Germany sailed over distant seas, to fight out the quarrel of a self-willed daughter of Britain with her motherland, they tore themselves from the arms of their dames with mutual oaths of truth and constancy; yet before the last Buoy of the Weser had got astern of them, the heroic navigators were for the most part forgotten of their Chloes. The fickle among these maidens, out of grief to find their hearts unoccupied, hastily supplied the vacuum by the surrogate of new intrigues; but the faithful and true, who

had constancy enough to stand the Weser-proof, and had still refrained from infidelity when the conquerors of their hearts had got beyond the Black Buoy, these, it is said, preserved their vow unbroken till the return of the heroic host into their German native country; and are still expecting from the hand of Love the recompense of their unwearied perseverance.

It is therefore less surprising that the fair Libussa, under these circumstances, could withstand the courting of the brilliant chivalry who struggled for her love, than that Penelope of Ithaca could let a whole cohort of wooers sigh for her in vain, when her heart had nothing in reserve but the grey-headed Ulysses. Rank and birth, however, had established such a difference in the situations of the Fräulein and of her beloved youth, that any closer union than Platonic love, a shadowy business which can neither warm nor nourish, was not readily to be expected. Though in those distant times, the pairing of the sexes was as little estimated by parchments and genealogical trees, as the chaffers were arranged by their antennæ and shell-wings, or the flowers by their pistils, stamina, calix and honey-produce; it was understood that with the lofty elm the precious vine should mate itself, and not the rough tangleweed which creeps along the hedges. A misassortment of marriage from a difference of rank an inch in breadth excited, it is true, less uproar than in these our classic times; yet a difference of an ell in breadth, especially when rivals occupied the interstice, and made the distance of of the two extremities more visible, was even then a thing which men could notice. All this, and much more did the Fräulein accurately ponder in her prudent heart; therefore she granted Passion, the treacherous babbler, no audience, loudly as it spoke in favour of the youth whom Love had honoured. Like a chaste vestal, she made an irrevocable vow to persist through life in her virgin closeness of heart; and to answer no inquiry of a wooer, either with her eyes, or her gestures, or her lips; yet reserving to herself, as a just indemnification, the right of platonising to any length she

liked. This unlike system suited the aspirants' way of thought so ill, that they could not in the least comprehend the killing coldness of their mistress; Jealousy, the confidant of Love, whispered torturing suspicion in their ears; each thought the other was the happy rival, and their penetration spied about unweariedly to make discoveries, which both of them recoiled from. Yet Fräulein Libussa weighed out her scanty graces to the two valiant Ritters with such prudence and acuteness, on so fair a balance, that the scale of neither rose above the other.

Weary of this fruitless waiting, both of them retired from the Court of their Princess, and settled, with secret discontent, upon the affeoffments which Duke Krokus had conferred on them. They brought so much ill-humour home with them, that Wladomir was an oppression to all his vassals and his neighbours; and Ritter Mizisla, on the other hand, became a hunter, followed deer and foxes over the seed-fields and fences of his subjects, and often with his train, to catch one hare, would ride ten acres of corn to nothing. In consequence, arose much sobbing and bewailing in the land; yet no righteous judge stepped forth to stay the mischief; for who would willingly give judgment against the stronger? And so the sufferings of the people never reached the throne of the Duchess. By the virtue of her second-sight, however, no injustice done within the wide limits of her sway could escape her observation; and the disposition of her mind being soft, like the sweet features of her face, she sorrowed inwardly at the misdeeds of her vassals, and the violence of the powerful. She took counsel with herself how the evil might be remedied, and her wisdom suggested an imitation of the gods, who, in their judicial procedure, do not fall upon the criminal, and cut him off as it were with the red hand; though vengeance, following with slow steps, sooner or later overtakes him. The young Princess appointed a general Convention of her Chivalry and States, and made proclamation, that whoever had a grievance or a wrong to be righted, should come forward free

and fearless under her safe-conduct. Thereupon, from every end and corner of her dominions, the maltreated and oppressed crowded towards her; the wranglers also, and litigious persons, and whoever had a legal cause against his neighbour. Libussa sat upon her throne, like the goddess Themis, and passed sentence, without respect of persons, with unerring judgment; for the labyrinthic mazes of chicane could not lead her astray, as they do the thick heads of city magistrates; and all men were astonished at the wisdom with which she unravelled the perplexed hanks of processes for *meum* and *tuum*, and at her unwearied patience in picking out the threads of justice, never once catching a false end, but passing them from side to side of their embroilments, and winding them off to the uttermost thrum.

When the tumult of the parties at her bar had by degrees diminished, and the sittings were about to be concluded, on the last day of the assizes audience was demanded by a free neighbour of the potent Wladomir, and by deputies from the subjects of the hunter Mizisla. They were admitted, and the Freeholder first addressing her, began: "An industrious planter," said he, "fenced in a little circuit, on the bank of a broad river, whose waters glided down with soft rushing through the green valley; for, he thought, The fair stream will be a guard to me on this side, that no hungry wild-beast eat my crops, and it will moisten the roots of my fruit-trees, that they flourish speedily and bring me fruit. But when the earnings of his toil were about to ripen, the deceitful stream grew troubled; its still waters began to swell and roar, it overflowed its banks, and carried one piece after another of the fruitful soil along with it; and dug itself a bed through the middle of the cultivated land; to the sorrow of the poor planter, who had to give up his little property to the malicious wasting of his strong neighbour, the raging of whose waves he himself escaped with difficulty. Puissant daughter of the wise Krokus, the poor planter entreats of thee to command the haughty river no longer to roll its

proud billows over the field of the toilsome husbandman, or wash away the fruit of his weary arms, his hope of glad harvest; but to flow peacefully along within the limits of its own channel."

During this speech, the cheerful brow of the fair Libussa became overclouded; manly rigour gleamed from her eyes, and all around was ear to catch her sentence, which ran thus: "Thy cause is plain and straight; no force shall disturb thy rightful privileges. A dike, which it shall not overpass, shall set bounds to the tumultuous river; and from its fishes thou shalt be repaid sevenfold the plunder of its wasteful billows." Then she beckoned to the eldest of the Deputies, and he bowed his face to the earth, and said: "Wise daughter of the far-famed Krokus, Whose is the grain upon the field, the sower's, who has hidden the seed-corn in the ground that it spring up and bare fruit; or the tempest's, which breaks it and scatters it away?" She answered: "The sower's."—"Then command the tempest," said the spokesman, "that it choose not our corn-fields for the scene of its caprices, to uproot our crops and shake the fruit from our trees."—"So be it," said the Duchess; "I will tame the tempest, and banish it from your fields; it shall battle with the clouds, and disperse them, where they are rising from the south, and threatening the land with hail and heavy weather."

Prince Wladomir and Ritter Mizisla were both assessors in the general tribunal. On hearing the complaint, and the rigorous sentence passed regarding it, they waxed pale, and looked down upon the ground with suppressed indignation; not daring to discover how sharply it stung them to be condemned by a decree from female lips. For although, out of tenderness to their honour, the complainants had modestly overhung the charge with an allegorical veil, which the righteous sentence of the fair President had also prudently respected, yet the texture of this covering was so fine and transparent, that whoever had an eye might see what stood behind it. But as they dared not venture to appeal from the judgment-

seat of the Princess to the people, since the sentence passed upon them had excited universal joy, they submitted to it, though with great reluctance. Wladomir indemnified his freeholding neighbour sevenfold for the mischief done him ; and Nimrod Mizisla engaged, on the honour of a knight, no more to select the corn-fields of his subjects as a chase for hare-catching. Libussa, at the same time, pointed out to them a more respectable employment, for occupying their activity, and restoring to their fame, which now, like a cracked pot when struck, emitted nothing but discords, the sound ring of knightly virtues. She placed them at the head of an army which she was despatching to encounter Zornebock, the Prince of the Sorbi, a giant, and a powerful magician withal, who was then meditating war against Bohemia. This commission she accompanied with the penance, that they were not to appear again at Court, till the one could offer her the plume, the other the golden spurs, of the monster, as tokens of their victory.

The unfading rose, during this campaign, displayed its magic virtues once more. By means of it, Prince Wladomir was as invulnerable to mortal weapons as Achilles the Hero ; and as nimble, quick and dextrous, as Achilles the light-of-foot. The armies met upon the southern boundaries of the Kingdom, and joined in fierce battle. The Bohemian heroes flew through the squadrons, like storm and whirlwind ; and cut down the thick spear-crop, as the scythe of the mower cuts a field of hay. Zornebock fell beneath the strong dints of their falchions ; they returned in triumph with the stipulated spoils to Vizegrad ; and the spots and blemishes, which had soiled their knightly virtue, were now washed clean away in the blood of their enemies. Libussa bestowed on them every mark of princely honour, dismissed them to their homes when the army was discharged ; and gave them, as a new token of her favour, a purple-red apple from her pleasure-garden, for a memorial of her by the road, enjoining them to part the same peacefully between them, without cutting it in

two. They then went their way; put the apple on a shield, and had it borne before them as a public spectacle, while they consulted together how the parting of it might be prudently effected, according to the meaning of its gentle giver.

While the point where their roads divided lay before them at a distance, they proceeded with their partition-treaty in the most accommodating mood; but at last it became necessary to determine which of the two should have the apple in his keeping, for both had equal shares in it, and only one could get it, though each promised to himself great wonders from the gift, and was eager to obtain possession of it. They split in their opinions on this matter; and things went so far, that it appeared as if the sword must decide, to whom this indivisible apple had been allotted by the fortune of arms. But a shepherd driving his flock overtook them as they stood debating; him they selected (apparently in imitation of the Three Goddesses, who also applied to a shepherd to decide their famous apple-quarrel), and made arbiter of their dispute, and laid the business in detail before him. The shepherd thought a little, then said: "In the gift of this apple lies a deep-hidden meaning; but who can bring it out, save the sage Virgin who hid it there? For myself, I conceive the apple is a treacherous fruit, that has grown upon the Tree of Discord, and its purple skin may prefigure bloody feud between your worshipful knightships; that each is to cut off the other, and neither of you get enjoyment of the gift. For, tell me, how is it possible to part an apple, without cutting it in twain?" The Knights took the shepherd's speech to heart, and thought there was a deal of truth in it. "Thou hast judged rightly," said they: "Has not this base apple already kindled anger and contention between us? Were we not standing harnessed to fight, for the deceitful gift of this proud Princess? Did she not put us at the head of her army, with intention to destroy us? And having failed in this, she now arms our hands with the weapons of discord against each other! We renounce her crafty present;

neither of us will have the apple. Be it thine, as the reward of thy righteous sentence: to the judge belongs the fruit of the process, and to the parties the rind."

The Knights then went their several ways, while the herdsman consumed the *objectum litis* with all the composure and conveniency common among judges. The ambiguous present of the Duchess cut them to the heart; and as they found, on returning home, that they could no longer treat their subjects and vassals in the former arbitrary fashion, but were forced to obey the laws, which Fräulein Libussa had promulgated for the general security among her people, their ill humour grew more deep and rancorous. They entered into a league offensive and defensive with each other; made a party for themselves in the country; and many mutinous wrongheads joined them, and were sent abroad in packs to decry and calumniate the government of women. "Shame! Shame!" cried they, "that we must obey a woman, who gathers our victorious laurels to decorate a distaff with them! The Man should be master of the house, and not the Wife; this is his special right, and so it is established everywhere, among all people. What is an army without a Duke to go before his warriors, but a helpless trunk without a head? Let us appoint a Prince, who may be a ruler over us, and whom we may obey."

These seditious speeches were no secret to the watchful Princess; nor was she ignorant what wind blew them thither, or what its sounding boded. Therefore she convened a deputation of the States; entered their assembly with the stateliness of an earthly goddess, and the words of her mouth dropped like honey from her virgin lips. "A rumour flies about the land," said she, "that you desire a Duke to go before you to battle, and that you reckon it inglorious to obey me any longer. Yet, in a free and unconstrained election, you yourselves did not choose a man from among you; but called one of the daughters of the people, and clothed her with the purple, to rule over you according to the laws and customs of the land. Whoso can accuse

me of error in conducting the government, let him step forward openly and freely, and bear witness against me. But if I, after the manner of my father Krokus, have done prudently and justly in the midst of you, making crooked things straight, and rough places plain; if I have secured your harvests from the spoiler, guarded the fruit-tree, and snatched the flock from the claws of the wolf; if I have bowed the stiff neck of the violent, assisted the down-pressed, and given the weak a staff to rest on; then will it beseem you to live according to your covenant, and be true, gentle and helpful to me, as in doing fealty to me you engaged. If you reckon it inglorious to obey a woman, you should have thought of this before appointing me to be your Princess; if there is disgrace here, it is you alone who ought to bear it. But your procedure shows you not to understand your own advantage: for woman's hand is soft and tender, accustomed only to waft cool air with the fan; and sinewy and rude is the arm of man, heavy and oppressive when it grasps the supreme control. And know ye not that where a woman governs, the rule is in the power of men? For she gives heed to wise counsellors, and these gather round her. But where the distaff excludes from the throne, there is the government of females; for the women, that please the king's eyes, have his heart in their hand. Therefore, consider well of your attempt, lest ye repent your fickleness too late."

The fair speaker ceased; and a deep reverent silence reigned throughout the hall of meeting; none presumed to utter a word against her. Yet Prince Wladomir and his allies desisted not from their intention, but whispered in each other's ear: "The sly Doe is loath to quit the fat pastures; but the hunter's horn shall sound yet louder, and scare her forth."[1] Next day they prompted the knights to call loudly on the Princess to choose a husband within three days, and

[1] *Invita de lætioribus pascuis, autor seditionis inquit, bucula ista decedit; sed jam vi inde deturbanda est, si suâ sponte loco suo concedere viro alicui principi noluerit.*—DUBRAVIUS.

by the choice of her heart to give the people a Prince, who might divide with her the cares of government. At this unexpected requisition, coming as it seemed, from the voice of the nation, a virgin blush overspread the cheeks of the lovely Princess; her clear eye discerned all the sunken cliffs, which threatened her with peril. For even if, according to the custom of the great world, she should determine upon subjecting her inclination to her state-policy, she could only give her hand to one suitor, and she saw well that all the remaining candidates would take it as a slight, and begin to meditate revenge. Besides, the private vow of her heart was inviolable and sacred in her eyes. Therefore she endeavoured prudently to turn aside this importunate demand of the States; and again attempted to persuade them altogether to renounce their schemes of innovation. "The eagle being dead," said she, "the birds chose the Ring-dove for their queen, and all of them obeyed her soft cooing call. But light and airy, as is the nature of birds, they soon altered their determination, and repented them that they had made it. The proud Peacock thought that it beseemed him better to be ruler; the keen Falcon, accustomed to make the smaller birds his prey, reckoned it disgraceful to obey the peaceful Dove; they formed a party, and appointed the weak-eyed Owl to be the spokesman of their combination, and propose a new election of a sovereign. The sluggish Bustard, the heavy-bodied Heathcock, the lazy Stork, the small-brained Heron, and all the larger birds chuckled, flapped, and croaked applause to him; and the host of little birds twittered, in their simplicity, and chirped out of bush and grove to the same tune. Then arose the warlike Kite, and soared boldly up into the air, and the birds cried out: 'What a majestic flight! The brave, strong Kite shall be our King!' Scarcely had the plundering bird taken possession of the throne, when he manifested his activity and courage on his winged subjects, in deeds of tyranny and caprice: he plucked the feathers from the larger fowls, and eat the little songsters."

Significant as this oration was, it made but a small impression on the minds of the people, hungering and thirsting after change; and they abode by their determination, that within three days, Fräulein Libussa should select herself a husband. At this, Prince Wladomir rejoiced in heart; for now, he thought, he should secure the fair prey, for which he had so long been watching in vain. Love and ambition inflamed his wishes, and put eloquence into his mouth, which had hitherto confined itself to secret sighing. He came to Court, and required audience of the Duchess.

"Gracious ruler of thy people and my heart," thus he addressed her, "from thee no secret is hidden; thou knowest the flames which burn in this bosom, holy and pure as on the altar of the gods, and thou knowest also what fire has kindled them. It is now appointed, that at the behest of thy people, thou give the land a Prince. Wilt thou disdain a heart, which lives and beats for thee? To be worthy of thy love, I risked my life to put thee on the throne of thy father. Grant me the merit of retaining thee upon it by the bond of tender affection: let us divide the possession of thy throne and thy heart; the first be thine, the second be mine, and my happiness will be exalted beyond the lot of mortals."

Fräulein Libussa wore a most maidenlike appearance during this oration, and covered her face with her veil, to hide the soft blush which deepened the colour of her cheeks. On its conclusion, she made a sign with her hand, not opening her lips, for the Prince to step aside; as if she would consider what she should resolve upon, in answer to his suit.

Immediately the brisk Knight Mizisla announced himself, and desired to be admitted.

"Loveliest of the daughters of princes," said he, as he entered the audience-chamber, "the fair Ring-dove, queen of the air, must no longer, as thou well knowest, coo in solitude, but take to herself a mate. The proud Peacock, it is talked, holds up his glittering plumage in her eyes, and thinks to

blind her by the splendour of his feathers; but she is prudent and modest, and will not unite herself with the haughty Peacock. The keen Falcon, once a plundering bird, has now changed his nature; is gentle and honest, and without deceit; for he loves the fair Dove, and would fain that she mated with him. That his bill is hooked and his talons sharp, must not mislead thee: he needs them to protect the fair Dove his darling, that no bird hurt her, or disturb the habitation of her rule; for he is true and kindly to her, and first swore fealty on the day when she was crowned. Now tell me, wise Princess, if the soft Dove will grant to her trusty Falcon the love which he longs for?"

Fräulein Libussa did as she had done before: beckoned to the Knight to step aside; and, after waiting for a space, she called the two rivals into her presence, and spoke thus:

"I owe you great thanks, noble Knights, for your help in obtaining me the princely crown of Bohemia, which my father Krokus honourably wore. The zeal, of which you remind me, had not faded from my remembrance; nor is it hid from my knowledge, that you virtuously love me, for your looks and gestures have long been the interpreters of your feelings. That I shut up my heart against you, and did not answer love with love, regard not as insensibility; it was not meant for slight or scorn, but for harmoniously determining a choice which was doubtful. I weighed your merits, and the tongue of the trying balance bent to neither side. Therefore I resolved on leaving the decision of your fate to yourselves; and offered you the possession of my heart, under the figure of an enigmatic apple; that it might be seen to which of you the greater measure of judgment and wisdom had been given, in appropriating to himself this gift, which could not be divided. Now tell me without delay, In whose hands is the apple? Whichever of you has won it from the other, let him from this hour receive my throne and my heart as the prize of his skill."

The two rivals looked at one another with amazement;

grew pale, and held their peace. At last, after a long pause, Prince Wladomir broke silence, and said:

"The enigmas of the wise are, to the foolish, a nut in a toothless mouth, a pearl which the cock scratches from the sand, a lantern in the hand of the blind. O Princess, be not wroth with us, that we neither knew the use nor the value of thy gift; we misinterpreted thy purpose; thought that thou hadst cast an apple of contention on our path, to awaken us to strife and deadly feud; therefore each gave up his share, and we renounced the divisive fruit, whose sole possession neither of us would have peaceably allowed the other!"

"You have given sentence on yourselves," replied the Fräulein: "if an apple could inflame your jealousy, what fighting would ye not have fought for a myrtle-garland twined about a crown!"

With this response she dismissed the Knights, who now lamented that they had given ear to the unwise arbiter, and thoughtlessly cast away the pledge of love, which, as it appeared, had been the casket of their fairest hopes. They meditated severally how they might still execute their purpose, and by force or guile get possession of the throne, with its lovely occupant.

Fräulein Libussa, in the mean while, was not spending in idleness the three days given her for consideration; but diligently taking counsel with herself, how she might meet the importunate demand of her people, give Bohemia a Duke, and herself a husband according to the choice of her heart. She dreaded lest Prince Wladomir might still more pressingly assail her, and perhaps deprive her of the throne. Necessity combined with love to make her execute a plan, with which she had often entertained herself as with a pleasant dream; for what mortal's head has not some phantom walking in it, towards which he turns in a vacant hour, to play with it as with a puppet? There is no more pleasing pastime for a strait-shod maiden, when her galled corns are resting from

the toils of the pavement, than to think of a stately and commodious equipage; the coy beauty dreams gladly of counts sighing at her feet; Avarice gets prizes in the Lottery; the debtor in the jail falls heir to vast possessions; the squanderer discovers the Hermetic Secret; and the poor woodcutter finds a treasure in the hollow of a tree; all merely in fancy, yet not without the enjoyment of a secret satisfaction. The gift of prophecy has always been united with a warm imagination; thus the fair Libussa had, like others, willingly and frequently given heed to this seductive playmate, which, in kind companionship, had always entertained her with the figure of the young Archer, so indelibly impressed upon her heart. Thousands of projects came into her mind, which Fancy palmed on her as feasible and easy. At one time she formed schemes of drawing forth her darling youth from his obscurity, placing him in the army, and raising him from one post of honour to another; and then instantly she bound a laurel garland about his temples, and led him, crowned with victory and honour, to the throne she could have been so glad to share with him. At other times, she gave a different turn to the romance: she equipped her darling as a knight-errant, seeking for adventures; brought him to her Court, and changed him into a Huon of Bordeaux; nor was the wondrous furniture wanting, for endowing him as highly as Friend Oberon did his ward. But when Common Sense again got possession of the maiden's soul, the many-coloured forms of the magic-lantern waxed pale in the beam of prudence, and the fair vision vanished into air. She then bethought her what hazards would attend such an enterprise; what mischief for her people, when jealousy and envy raised the hearts of her grandees in rebellion against her, and the alarum beacon of discord gave the signal for uproar and sedition in the land. Therefore she sedulously hid the wishes of her heart from the keen glance of the spy, and disclosed no glimpse of them to any one.

But now, when the people were clamouring for a Prince,

the matter had assumed another form: the point would now be attained, could she combine her wishes with the national demand. She strengthened her soul with manly resolution; and as the third day dawned, she adorned herself with all her jewels, and her head was encircled with a myrtle crown. Attended by her maidens, all decorated with flower garlands, she ascended the throne, full of lofty courage and soft dignity. The assemblage of knights and vassals around her stood in breathless attention, to learn from her lips the name of the happy Prince with whom she had resolved to share her heart and throne. "Ye nobles of my people," thus she spoke, "the lot of your destiny still lies untouched in the urn of concealment; you are still free as my coursers that graze in the meadows, before the bridle and the bit have curbed them, or their smooth backs have been pressed by the burden of the saddle and the rider. It now rests with you to signify, Whether, in the space allowed me for the choice of a spouse, your hot desire for a Prince to rule over you has cooled, and given place to more calm scrutiny of this intention; or you still persist inflexibly in your demand." She paused for a moment; but the hum of the multitude, the whispering and buzzing, and looks of the whole Senate, did not long leave her in uncertainty, and their speaker ratified the conclusion, that the vote was still for a Duke. "Then be it so!" said she; "the die is cast, the issue of it stands not with me! The gods have appointed, for the kingdom of Bohemia, a Prince who shall sway its sceptre with justice and wisdom. The young cedar does not yet overtop the firm-set oaks; concealed among the trees of the forest it grows, encircled with ignoble shrubs; but soon it shall send forth branches to give shade to its roots; and its top shall touch the clouds. Choose a deputation, ye nobles of the people, of twelve honourable men from among you, that they hasten to seek out the Prince, and attend him to the throne. My steed will point out your path; unloaded and free it shall course on before you; and as a token that you have found what

you are sent forth to seek, observe that the man whom the gods have selected for your Prince, at the time when you approach him, will be eating his repast on an iron table, under the open sky, in the shadow of a solitary tree. To him you shall do reverence, and clothe his body with the princely robe. The white horse will let him mount it, and bring him hither to the Court, that he may be my husband and your lord."

She then left the assembly, with the cheerful yet abashed countenance which brides wear, when they look for the arrival of the bridegroom. At her speech there was much wondering; and the prophetic spirit breathing from it worked upon the general mind like a divine oracle, which the populace blindly believe, and which thinkers alone attempt investigating. The messengers of honour were selected, the white horse stood in readiness, caparisoned with Asiatic pomp, as if it had been saddled for carrying the Grand Signior to mosque. The cavalcade set forth, attended by the concourse, and the loud huzzaing of the people; and the white horse paced on before. But the train soon vanished from the eyes of the spectators: and nothing could be seen but a little cloud of dust whirling up afar off: for the spirited courser, getting to its mettle when it reached the open air, began a furious gallop, like a British racer, so that the squadron of deputies could hardly keep in sight of it. Though the quick steed seemed abandoned to its own guidance, an unseen power directed its steps, pulled its bridle, and spurred its flanks. Fräulein Libussa, by the magic virtues inherited from her Elfine mother, had contrived so to instruct the courser, that it turned neither to the right hand nor to the left from its path, but with winged steps hastened on to its destination: and she herself, now that all combined to the fulfilment of her wishes, awaited its returning rider with tender longing.

The messengers had in the mean time been soundly galloped; already they had travelled many leagues, up hill

and down dale; had swum across the Elbe and the Moldau; and as their gastric juices made them think of dinner, they recalled to mind the strange table, at which, according to the Fräulein's oracle, their new Prince was to be feeding. Their glosses and remarks on it were many. A forward knight observed to his companions: "In my poor view of it, our gracious lady has it in her eye to bilk us, and make April messengers of us; for who ever heard of any man in Bohemia that ate his victuals off an iron table? What use is it? our sharp galloping will bring us nothing but mockery and scorn." Another, of a more penetrating turn, imagined that the iron table might be allegorical; that they should perhaps fall in with some knight-errant, who, after the manner of the wandering brotherhood, had sat down beneath a tree, and spread out his frugal dinner on his shield. A third said, jesting: "I fear our way will lead us down to the workshop of the Cyclops; and we shall find the lame Vulcan, or one of his journeymen, dining from his stithy, and must bring *him* to our Venus."

Amid such conversation, they observed their guiding quadruped, which had got a long start of them, turn across a new-ploughed field, and, to their wonder, halt beside the ploughman. They dashed rapidly forward, and found a peasant sitting on an upturned plough, and eating his black bread from the iron plough-share, which he was using as a table, under the shadow of a fresh pear-tree. He seemed to like the stately horse; he patted it, offered it a bit of bread, and it ate from his hand. The Embassy, of course, was much surprised at this phenomenon; nevertheless, no member of it doubted but that they had found their man. They approached him reverently, and the eldest among them opened his lips, and said: "The Duchess of Bohemia has sent us hither, and bids us signify to thee the will and purpose of the gods, that thou change thy plough with the throne of this kingdom, and thy goad with its sceptre. She selects thee for her husband, to rule with her over the

Bohemians." The young peasant thought they meant to banter him; a thing little to his taste, especially as he supposed that they had guessed his love-secret, and were now come to mock his weakness. Therefore he answered somewhat stoutly, to meet mockery with mockery: "But is your dukedom worth this plough? If the prince cannot eat with better relish, drink more joyously, or sleep more soundly than the peasant, then in sooth it is not worth while to change this kindly furrow-field with the Bohemian kingdom, or this smooth ox-goad with its sceptre. For, tell me, Are not three grains of salt as good for seasoning my morsel as three bushels?"

Then one of the Twelve answered: "The purblind mole digs underground for worms to feed upon; for he has no eyes which can endure the daylight, and no feet which are formed for running like the nimble roe; the scaly crab creeps to and fro in the mud of lakes and marshes, delights to dwell under tree-roots and shrubs by the banks of rivers, for he wants the fins for swimming; and the barn-door cock, cooped up within his hen-fence, risks no flight over the low wall, for he is too timorous to trust in his wings, like the high-soaring bird of prey. Have eyes for seeing, feet for going, fins for swimming, and pinions for flight been allotted thee, thou wilt not grub like a mole underground; nor hide thyself like a dull shell-fish among mud; nor, like the king of the poultry, be content with crowing from the barn-door: but come forward into day; run, swim, or fly into the clouds, as Nature may have furnished thee with gifts. For it suffices not the active man to continue what he is; but he strives to become what he may be. Therefore, do thou try being what the gods have called thee to; then wilt thou judge rightly whether the Bohemian kingdom is worth an acre of corn-land in barter, yea or not."

This earnest oration of the Deputy, in whose face no jesting feature was to be discerned; and still more the insignia of royalty, the purple robe, the sceptre and the golden sword,

which the ambassadors brought forward as a reference and certificate of their mission's authenticity, at last overcame the mistrust of the doubting ploughman. All at once, light rose on his soul; a rapturous thought awoke in him, that Libussa had discovered the feelings of his heart; had by her skill in seeing what was secret, recognised his faithfulness and constancy: and was about to recompense him, so as he had never ventured even in dreams to hope. The gift of prophecy predicted to him by her oracle, then came into his mind; and he thought that now or never it must be fulfilled. Instantly he grasped his hazel staff; stuck it deep into the ploughed land; heaped loose mould about it as you plant a tree; and, lo, immediately the staff got buds, and shot forth sprouts and boughs with leaves and flowers. Two of the green twigs withered, and their dry leaves became the sport of the wind; but the third grew up the more luxuriantly, and its fruits ripened. Then came the spirit of prophecy upon the rapt ploughman; he opened his mouth, and said: "Ye messengers of the Princess Libussa and of the Bohemian people, hear the words of Primislaus the son of Mnatha, the stout-hearted Knight, for whom, blown upon by the spirit of prophecy, the mists of the Future part asunder. The man who guided the ploughshare, ye have called to seize the handles of your princedom, before his day's work was ended. O that the glebe had been broken by the furrow, to the boundary-stone; so had Bohemia remained an independent kingdom to the utmost ages! But since ye have disturbed the labour of the plougher too early, the limits of your country will become the heritage of your neighbour, and your distant posterity will be joined to him in unchangeable union. The three twigs of the budding Staff are three sons which your Princess shall bear me: two of them, as unripe shoots, shall speedily wither away; but the third shall inherit the throne, and by him shall the fruit of late grandchildren be matured, till the Eagle soar over your mountains and nestle in the land; yet soon fly thence, and return as to his own possession. And

then, when the Son of the Gods arises,[1] who is his plougher's friend, and smites the slave-fetters from his limbs, then mark it, Posterity, for thou shalt bless thy destiny! For when he has trodden under his feet the Dragon of Superstition, he will stretch out his arm against the waxing moon, to pluck it from the firmament, that he may himself illuminate the world as a benignant star."

The venerable deputation stood in silent wonder, gazing at the prophetic man, like dumb idols: it was as if a god were speaking by his lips. He himself turned away from them to the two white steers, the associates of his toilsome labour; he unyoked and let them go in freedom from their farm-service; at which they began frisking joyfully upon the grassy lea, but at the same time visibly decreased in bulk; like thin vapour melted into air, and vanished out of sight. Then Primislaus doffed his peasant wooden shoes, and proceeded to the brook to clean himself. The precious robes were laid upon him; he begirt himself with the sword, and had the golden spurs put on him like a knight; then stoutly sprang upon the white horse, which bore him peaceably along. Being now about to quit his still asylum, he commanded the ambassadors to bring his wooden shoes after him, and keep them carefully, as a token that the humblest among the people had once been exalted to the highest dignity in Bohemia; and as a memorial for his posterity to bear their elevation meekly, and, mindful of their origin, to respect and defend the peasantry, from which themselves had sprung. Hence came the ancient practice of exhibiting a pair of wooden shoes before the Kings of Bohemia on their coronation; a custom held in observance till the male line of Primislaus became extinct.

The planted hazel rod bore fruit and grew; striking roots out on every side, and sending forth new shoots, till at last the whole field was changed into a hazel copse; a circumstance of great advantage to the neighbouring township,

[1] Emperor Joseph II.

which included it within their bounds; for, in memory of this miraculous plantation, they obtained a grant from the Bohemian Kings, exempting them from ever paying any public contribution in the land, except a pint of hazel nuts; which royal privilege their late descendants, as the story runs, are enjoying at this day.[1]

Though the white courser, which was now proudly carrying the bridegroom to his mistress, seemed to outrun the winds, Primislaus did not fail now and then to let him feel the golden spurs, to push him on still faster. The quick gallop seemed to him a tortoise-pace, so keen was his desire to have the fair Libussa, whose form, after seven years, was still so new and lovely in his soul, once more before his eyes; and this not merely as a show, like some bright peculiar anemone in the variegated bed of a flower-garden, but for the blissful appropriation of victorious love. He thought only of the myrtle-crown, which, in the lover's valuation, far outshines the crown of sovereignty; and had he balanced love and rank against each other, the Bohemian throne without Libussa would have darted up, like a clipped ducat in the scales of the money-changer.

The sun was verging to decline, when the new Prince, with his escort, entered Vizegrad. Fräulein Libussa was in her garden, where she had just plucked a basket of ripe plums, when her future husband's arrival was announced to her. She went forth modestly, with all her maidens, to meet him; received him as a bridegroom conducted to her by the gods, veiling the election of her heart under a show of submission to the will of Higher Powers. The eyes of the Court were eagerly directed to the stranger; in whom, however, nothing could be seen but a fair handsome man. In respect of outward form, there were several courtiers who, in thought,

[1] Æneas Sylvius affirms that he saw, with his own eyes, a renewal of this charter from Charles IV. *Vidi inter privilegia regni literas Caroli Quarti, Romanorum Imperatoris, divi Sigismundi patris, in quibus (villæ illius incolæ) libertate donantur; nec plus tributi pendere jubentur, quam nucum illius arboris exiguam mensuram.*

did not hesitate to measure with him; and could not understand why the gods should have disdained the antechamber, and not selected from it some accomplished and ruddy lord, rather than the sunburnt ploughman, to assist the Princess in her government. Especially in Wladomir and Mizisla, it was observable that their pretensions were reluctantly withdrawn. It behoved the Fräulein then to vindicate the work of the gods; and show that Squire Primislaus had been indemnified for the defect of splendid birth, by a fair equivalent in sterling common sense and depth of judgment. She had caused a royal banquet to be prepared, no whit inferior to the feast with which the hospitable Dido entertained her pious guest Æneas. The cup of welcome passed diligently round, the presents of the Princess had excited cheerfulness and good-humour, and a part of the night had already vanished amid jests and pleasant pastime, when Libussa set on foot a game at riddles; and, as a discovery of hidden things was her proper trade, she did not fail to solve, with satisfactory decision, all the riddles that were introduced.

When her own turn came to propose one, she called Prince Wladomir, Mizisla and Primislaus to her, and said: "Fair sirs, it is now for you to read a riddle, which I shall submit to you, that it may be seen who among you is the wisest and of keenest judgment. I intended, for you three, a present of this basket of plums, which I plucked in my garden. One of you shall have the half, and one over; the next shall have the half of what remains, and one over; the third shall again have the half, and three over. Now, if so be that the basket is then emptied, tell me, How many plums are in it now?"

The headlong Ritter Mizisla took the measure of the fruit with his eye, not the sense of the riddle with his understanding, and said: "What can be decided with the sword I might undertake to decide; but thy riddles, gracious Princess, are, I fear, too hard for me. Yet at thy request

I will risk an arrow at the bull's-eye, let it hit or miss: I suppose there is a matter of some three-score plums in the basket."

"Thou hast missed, dear Knight," said Fräulein Libussa. "Were there as many again, half as many, and a third part as many as the basket has in it, and five over, there would then be as many above three-score as there are now below it."

Prince Wladomir computed as laboriously and anxiously, as if the post of Comptroller-General of Finances had depended on a right solution; and at last brought out the net product five-and-forty. The Fräulein then said:

"Were there a third, and a half, and a sixth as many again of them, the number would exceed forty-five as much as it now falls short of it."

Though, in our days, any man endowed with the arithmetical faculty of a tapster, might have solved this problem without difficulty, yet, for an untaught computant, the gift of divination was essential, if he meant to get out of the affair with honour, and not stick in the middle of it with disgrace. As the wise Primislaus was happily provided with this gift, it cost him neither art nor exertion to find the answer.

"Familiar companion of the heavenly Powers," said he, "whoso undertakes to pierce thy high celestial meaning, undertakes to soar after the eagle when he hides himself in the clouds. Yet I will pursue thy hidden flight, as far as the eye, to which thou hast given its light, will reach. I judge that of the plums which thou hast laid in the basket, there are thirty in number, not one fewer, and none more."

The Fräulein cast a kindly glance on him, and said: "Thou tracest the glimmering ember, which lies deep-hid among the ashes; for thee light dawns out of darkness and vapour: thou hast read my riddle."

Thereupon she opened her basket, and counted out fifteen plums, and one over, into Prince Wladomir's hat, and fourteen

remained. Of these she gave Ritter Mizisla seven and one over, and there were still six in the basket; half of these she gave the wise Primislaus and three over, and the basket was empty. The whole Court was lost in wonder at the fair Libussa's ciphering gift, and at the penetration of her cunning spouse. Nobody could comprehend how human wit was able, on the one hand, to enclose a common number so mysteriously in words; or, on the other hand, to drag it forth so accurately from its enigmatical concealment. The empty basket she conferred upon the two Knights, who had failed in soliciting her love, to remind them that their suit was voided. Hence comes it, that when a wooer is rejected, people say, *His love has given him the basket*, even to the present day.

So soon as all was ready for the nuptials and coronation, both these ceremonies were transacted with becoming pomp. Thus the Bohemian people had obtained a Duke, and the fair Libussa had obtained a husband, each according to the wish of their hearts; and what was somewhat wonderful, by virtue of Chicane, an agent who has not the character of being too beneficent or prosperous. And if either of the parties had been overreached in any measure, it at least was not the fair Libussa. Bohemia had a Duke in name, but the administration now, as formerly, continued in the female hand. Primislaus was the proper pattern of a tractable obedient husband, and contested with his Duchess neither the direction of her house nor of her empire. His sentiments and wishes sympathised with hers, as perfectly as two accordant strings, of which when the one is struck, the other voluntarily trembles to the self-same note. Nor was Libussa like those haughty overbearing dames, who would pass for great matches; and having, as they think, made the fortune of some hapless wight, continually remind him of his wooden shoes: but she resembled the renowned Palmyran Queen; and ruled, as Zenobia did her kindly Odenatus, by superiority of mental talent.

The happy couple lived in the enjoyment of unchangeable love; according to the fashion of those times, when the instinct which united hearts was as firm and durable, as the mortar and cement with which they built their indestructible strongholds. Duke Primislaus soon became one of the most accomplished and valiant knights of his time, and the Bohemian Court the most splendid in Germany. By degrees, many knights and nobles, and multitudes of people from all quarters of the empire, drew to it; so that Vizegrad became too narrow for its inhabitants; and, in consequence, Libussa called her officers before her, and commanded them to found a city, on the spot where they should find a man at noontide making the wisest use of his teeth. They set forth, and at the time appointed found a man engaged in sawing a block of wood. They judged that this industrious character was turning his saw-teeth, at noontide, to a far better use than the parasite does his jaw-teeth by the table of the great; and doubted not but they had found the spot, intended by the Princess for the site of their town. They marked out a space upon the green with the ploughshare, for the circuit of the city walls. On asking the workman what he meant to make of the sawed timber, he replied, "Prah," which in the Bohemian language signifies a door-threshold. So Libussa called her new city Praha, that is, Prague, the well-known capital upon the Moldau. In process of time, Primislaus's predictions were punctually fulfilled. His spouse became the mother of three Princes; two died in youth, but the third grew to manhood, and from him went forth a glorious royal line, which flourished for long centuries on the Bohemian throne.

MELECHSALA

Father Gregory, the ninth of the name who sat upon St. Peter's chair, had once, in a sleepless night, an inspiration from the spirit, not of prophecy, but of political chicane, to clip the wings of the German Eagle, lest it rose above the head of his own haughty Rome. No sooner had the first sunbeam enlightened the venerable Vatican, than his Holiness summoned his attendant chamberlain, and ordered him to call a meeting of the Sacred College; where Father Gregory, in his pontifical apparel, celebrated high mass, and after its conclusion moved a new Crusade; to which all his cardinals, readily surmising the wise objects of this armament for God's glory and the common weal of Christendom, gave prompt and cordial assent.

Thereupon, a cunning Nuncio started instantly for Naples, where the Emperor Frederick of Swabia had his Court; and took with him in his travelling-bag two boxes, one of which was filled with the sweet honey of persuasion; the other with tinder, steel and flint, to light the fire of excommunication, should the mutinous son of the Church hesitate to pay the Holy Father due obedience. On arriving at Court, the Legate opened his sweet box, and copiously gave out its smooth confectionery. But the Emperor Frederick was a man delicate in palate; he soon smacked the taste of the physic hidden in this sweetness, and he knew too well its effects on the alimentary canal; so he turned away from the treacherous mess, and declined having any more of it. Then the Legate opened his other box, and made it spit some sparks, which singed the Imperial beard, and stung the skin

like nettles; whereby the Emperor discovered that the Holy Father's finger might, ere long, be heavier on him than the Legate's loins; therefore plied himself to the purpose, engaged to lead the armies of the Lord against the Unbelievers in the East, and appointed his Princes to assemble for an expedition to the Holy Land. The Princes communicated the Imperial order to the Counts, the Counts summoned out their vassals, the Knights and Nobles; the Knights equipped their Squires and Horsemen; all mounted, and collected, each under his proper banner.

Except the night of St. Bartholomew, no night has ever caused such sorrow and tribulation in the world, as this, which God's Vicegerent upon Earth had employed in watching to produce a ruinous Crusade. Ah, how many warm tears flowed, as knight and squire pricked off, and blessed their dears! A glorious race of German heroes never saw the light, because of this departure; but languished in embryo, as the germs of plants in the Syrian desert, when the hot Sirocco has passed over them. The ties of a thousand happy marriages were violently torn asunder; ten thousand brides in sorrow hung their garlands, like the daughters of Jerusalem upon the Babylonian willow-trees, and sat and wept; and a hundred thousand lovely maidens grew up for the bridegroom in vain, and blossomed like a rose-bed in a solitary cloister garden, for there was no hand to pluck them, and they withered away unenjoyed. Among the sighing spouses, whom this sleepless night of his Holiness deprived of their husbands, were St. Elizabeth, the Landgraf of Thuringia's lady, and Ottilia, Countess of Gleichen; a wife not standing, it is true, in the odour of sanctity, yet in respect of personal endowments, and virtuous conduct, inferior to none of her contemporaries.

Landgraf Ludwig, a trusty feudatory of the Emperor, had issued general orders for his vassals to collect, and attend him to the camp. But most of them sought pretexts for politely declining this honour. One was tormented by the gout,

another by the stone; one had got his horses foundered, another's armoury had been destroyed by fire. Count Ernst of Gleichen, however, with a little troop of stout retainers, who were free and unencumbered, and took pleasure in the prospect of distant adventures, equipped their squires and followers, obeyed the orders of the Landgraf, and led their people to the place of rendezvous. The Count had been wedded for two years; and in this period his lovely consort had presented him with two children, a little master and a little miss, which, according to the custom of those stalwart ages, had been born without the aid of science, fair and softly as the dew from the Twilight. A third pledge, which she carried under her heart, was, by virtue of the Pope's insomnolency, destined, when it saw the light, to forego the embraces of its father. Although Count Ernst put on the rugged aspect of a man, Nature maintained her rights in him, and he could not hide his strong feelings of tenderness, when at parting he quitted the embraces of his weeping spouse. As in dumb sorrow he was leaving her, she turned hastily to the cradle of her children; plucked out of it her sleeping boy; pressed it softly to her breast, and held it with tearful eyes to the father, to imprint a parting kiss on its unconscious cheek. With her little girl she did the same. This gave the Count a sharp twinge about the heart; his lips began to quiver, his mouth visibly increased in breadth; and sobbing aloud, he pressed the infants to his steel cuirass, under which there beat a very soft and feeling heart; kissed them from their sleep, and recommended them, together with their much loved mother, to the keeping of God and all the Saints. As he winded down along the castle road with his harnessed troop from the high fortress of Gleichen, she looked after him with desolate sadness, till his banner, upon which she herself had wrought the Red-cross with fine purple silk, no longer floated in her vision.

Landgraf Ludwig was exceedingly contented as he saw his stately vassal, and his knights and squires, advancing with

their flag unfurled; but on viewing him more narrowly, and noticing his trouble, he grew wroth; for he thought the Count was faint of heart, and out of humour with the expedition, and following it against his will. Therefore his brow wrinkled down into frowns, and the landgraphic nostrils sniffed displeasure. Count Ernst had a fine pathognomic eye; he soon observed what ailed his lord, and going boldly up, disclosed to him the reason of his cloudy mood. His words were as oil on the vinegar of discontent; the Landgraf, with honest frankness, seized his vassal's hand, and said: "Ah, is it so, good cousin? Then the shoe pinches both of us in one place; Elizabeth's good-b'ye has given me a sore heart too. But be of good cheer! While we are fighting abroad, our wives will be praying at home, that we may return with renown and glory." Such was the custom of the country in those days: while the husband took the field, the wife continued in her chamber, solitary and still, fasting and praying, and making vows without end, for his prosperous return. This old usage is not universal in the land at present; as the last crusade of our German warriors to the distant West,[1] by the rich increase of families during the absence of their heroic heads, has sufficiently made manifest.

The pious Elizabeth felt no less pain at parting from her husband than her fair companion in distress, the Countess of Gleichen. Though her lord the Landgraf was rather of a stormy disposition, she had lived with him in the most perfect unity: and his terrestrial mass was by degrees so imbued with the sanctity of his helpmate, that some beneficent historians have appended to him likewise the title of Saint; which, however, must be looked on rather as a charitable compliment than a real statement of the truth; as with us, in these times, the epithets of great, magnanimous, immortal, erudite, profound, for the most part indicate no more than a little outward edge-gilding. So much appears from all the circumstances, that the elevated couple did not always harmonise in

[1] Of the Hessian troops to America, during the Revolutionary War.—Ed.

works of holiness; nay, that the Powers of Heaven had to interfere at times in the domestic differences thence arising, to maintain the family peace: as the following example will evince. The pious lady, to the great dissatisfaction of her courtiers and lip-licking pages, had the custom of reserving from the Landgraf's table the most savoury dishes for certain hungry beggars, who incessantly beleaguered the castle; and she used to give herself the satisfaction, when the court dinner was concluded, of distributing this kind donation to the poor with her own hands. According to the courtly system, whereby thrift on the small scale is always to make up for wastefulness on the great, the meritorious cook-department every now and then complained of this as earnestly as if the whole dominions of Thuringia had run the risk of being eaten up by these lank-sided guests; and the Landgraf, who dabbled somewhat in economy, regarded it as so important an affair, that, in all seriousness, he strictly forbade his consort this labour of love, which had through time become her spiritual hobby. Nevertheless, one day the impulse of benevolence, and the temptation to break through her husband's orders in pursuit of it, became too strong to be resisted. She beckoned to her women, who were then uncovering the table, to take off some untouched dishes, with a few rolls of wheaten bread, and keep them as smuggled goods. These she packed into a little basket, and stole out with it by a postern gate.

But the watchers had got wind of it, and betrayed it to the Landgraf, who gave instant orders for a strict guard upon all the outlets of the castle. Being told that his lady had been seen gliding with a heavy load through the postern, he proceeded with majestic strides across the court-yard, and stept out upon the drawbridge, as if to take a mouthful of fresh air. Alas! The pious lady heard the jingling of his golden spurs; and fear and terror came upon her, till her knees trembled, and she could not move another footstep. She concealed the victual-basket under her apron, that modest covering of female charms and roguery; but whatever privileges

this inviolable asylum may enjoy against excisemen and officers of customs, it is no wall of brass for a husband. The Landgraf, smelling mischief, hastened to the place; his sun-burnt cheeks were reddened with indignation, and the veins swelled fearfully upon his brow.

"Wife," said he, in a hasty tone, "what hast thou in the basket thou art hiding from me? Is it victuals from my table, for thy vile crew of vagabonds and beggars?"

"Not at all, dear lord," replied Elizabeth, meekly, but with embarrassment, who held herself entitled, without prejudice to her sanctity, to make a little slip in the present critical position of affairs: "it is nothing but a few roses that I gathered in the garden."

Had the Landgraf been one of our contemporaries, he must have believed his lady on her word of honour, and desisted from farther search; but in those wild times the minds of men were not so polished.

"Let us see," said the imperious husband, and sharply pulled the apron to a side. The tender wife had no defence against this violence but by recoiling: "O! softly, softly, my dear husband!" said she, and blushed for shame at being detected in a falsehood, in presence of her servants. But, O wonder upon wonder! the *corpus delicti* was in very deed transformed into the fairest blooming roses; the rolls had changed to white roses, the sausages to red, the omelets to yellow ones! With joyful amazement the saintly dame observed this metamorphosis, and knew not whether to believe her eyes; for she had never given credit to her Guardian Angel for such delicate politeness, as to work a miracle in favour of a lady, when the point was to cajole a rigorous husband, and make good a female affirmation.

So visible a proof of innocence allayed the fierceness of the Lion. He now turned his tremendous looks on the down-stricken serving-men, who, as it was apparent, had been groundlessly calumniating his angelic wife; he scornfully rated them, and swore a deep oath, that the first eaves-dropping

pickthank who again accused his virtuous wife to him, he would cast into the dungeon, and there let him lie and rot. This done, he took a rose from the basket, and stuck it in his hat, in triumph for his lady's innocence. History has not certified us, whether, on the following day, he found a withered rose or a cold sausage there: in the meantime it assures us, that the saintly wife, when her lord had left her with the kiss of peace, and she herself had recovered from her fright, stept down the hill, much comforted in heart, to the meadow where her nurslings, the lame and blind, the naked and the hungry, were awaiting her, to dole out among them her intended bounty. For she well knew that the miraculous deception would again vanish were she there, as in reality it did; for, on opening her victual-magazine she found no roses at all, but in their stead the nutritious crumbs which she had snatched from the teeth of the castle bone-polishers.

Though now, by the departure of her husband, she was to be freed from his rigorous superintendence, and obtain free scope to execute her labours of love in secret or openly, when and where it pleased her, yet she loved her imperious husband so faithfully and sincerely, that she could not part from him without the deepest sorrow. Ah! she foreboded but too well, that in this world she should not see him any more. And for the enjoyment of him in the other, the aspect of affairs was little better. A canonised Saint has such preferment there, that all other Saints compared with her are but a heavenly mob.

High as the Landgraf had been stationed in this sublunary world, it was a question whether, in the courts of Heaven, he might be found worthy to kneel on the footstool of her throne, and raise his eyes to his former bedmate. Yet, many vows as she made, many good works as she did, much as her prayers in other cases had availed with all the Saints, her credit in the upper world was not sufficient to stretch out her husband's term a span. He died on this march, in the bloom of life, of

a malignant fever, at Otranto, before he had acquired the knightly merit of chining a single Saracen. While he was preparing for departure, and the time was come for him to give the world his blessing, he called Count Ernst from among his other servants and vassals to his bedside; appointed him commander of the troops which he himself had led thus far, and made him swear that he would not return till he had thrice drawn his sword against the Infidel. Then he took the holy viaticum from the hands of his marching chaplain; and ordering as many masses for his soul, as might have brought himself and all his followers triumphantly into the New Jerusalem, he breathed his last. Count Ernst had the corpse of his lord embalmed: he enclosed it in a silver coffin, and sent it to the widowed lady, who wore mourning for her husband like a Roman Empress, for she never laid her weeds aside while she continued in this world.

Count Ernst of Gleichen forwarded the pilgrimage as much as possible, and arrived in safety with his people in the camp at Ptolemais. Here, it was rather a theatrical emblem of war than a serious campaign that met his view. For as on our stages, when they represent a camp or field of battle, there are merely a few tents erected in the foreground, and a little handful of players scuffling together; but in the distance many painted tents and squadrons to assist the illusion, and cheat the eye, the whole being merely intended for an artificial deception of the senses; so also was the crusading army a mixture of fiction and reality. Of the numerous heroic hosts that left their native country, it was always the smallest part that reached the boundaries of the land they had gone forth to conquer. But few were devoured by the swords of the Saracens. These Infidels had powerful allies, whom they sent beyond their frontiers, and who made brisk work among their enemies, though getting neither wages nor thanks for their good service. These allies were, Hunger and Nakedness, Perils by land and water and among bad brethren, Frost and Heat, Pestilence and malignant Boils;

and the grinding Home-sickness also fell at times like a heavy Incubus upon the steel harness, and crushed it together like soft pasteboard, and spurred the steed to a quick return. Under these circumstances, Count Ernst had little hope of speedily fulfilling his oath, and thrice dyeing his knightly sword in unbelieving blood, as must be done before he thought of returning. For three days' journey round the camp, no Arab archer was to be seen; the weakness of the Christian host lay concealed behind its bulwarks and entrenchments; they did not venture out to seek the distant enemy, but waited for the slow help of his slumbering Holiness, who, since the wakeful night that gave rise to this Crusade, had enjoyed unbroken sleep, and about the issue of the Holy War had troubled himself very little.

In this inaction, as inglorious to the Christian army, as of old that loitering was to the Greeks before the walls of bloody but courageous Troy, where the godlike Achilles, with his confederates, moped so long about his fair Briseis,—the chivalry of Christendom kept up much jollity and recreation in their camp, to kill lazy time, and scare away the blue devils; the Italians, with song and harping, to which the nimble-footed Frenchmen danced; the solemn Spaniards with chess; the English with cockfighting; the Germans with feasting and wassail.

Count Ernst, taking small delight in any of these pastimes, amused himself with hunting; made war on the foxes in the dry wildernesses, and pursued the shy chamois into the barren mountains. The knights of his train "disagreed" with the glowing sun by day, and the damp evening air under the open sky, and sneaked to a side when their lord called for his horses; therefore, in his hunting expeditions, he was generally attended only by his faithful Squire, named the mettled Kurt, and a single groom. Once, his eagerness in clambering after the chamois had carried him to such a distance, that the sun was dipping in the Mid-sea wave before he thought of returning; and, fast as he hastened homewards, night came upon

him at a distance from the camp. The appearance of some treacherous *ignes fatui*, which he mistook for the watch-fires, led him off still farther. On discovering his error, he resolved to rest beneath a tree till daybreak. The trusty Squire prepared a bed of soft moss for his lord, who, wearied by the heat of the day, fell asleep before he could lift his hand to bless himself, according to custom, with the sign of the cross. But to the mettled Kurt there came no wink of sleep, for he was by nature watchful like a bird of darkness; and though this gift had not belonged to him, his faithful care for his lord would have kept him waking. The night, as usual in the climate of Asia, was serene and still; the stars twinkled in pure diamond light; and solemn silence, as in the Valley of Death, reigned over the wide desert. No breath of air was stirring, yet the nocturnal coolness poured life and refreshment over herb and living thing. But about the third watch, when the morning star had begun to announce the coming day, there arose a din in the dusky remoteness, like the voice of a forest stream rushing over some steep precipice. The watchful squire listened eagerly, and sent his other senses also out for tidings, as his sharp eye could not pierce the veil of darkness. He hearkened, and snuffed at the same time, like a bloodhound, for a scent came towards him as of sweet-smelling herbs and trodden grass, and the strange noise appeared to be approaching. He laid his ear to the ground, and heard a trampling as of horses' hoofs, which led him to conclude that the Infernal Chase was hunting in these parts. A cold shudder passed over him, and his terror grew extreme. He shook his master from sleep; and the latter, having roused himself, soon saw that here another than a spectral host was to be fronted. Whilst his groom girded up the horses, the Count had his harness buckled on in all haste.

The dim shadows gradually withdrew, and the advancing morning tinted the eastern hem of the horizon with purple light. The Count now discovered, what he had anticipated, a host of Saracens approaching, all equipped for fight, to

snatch some booty from the Christians. To escape their hands was hopeless, and the hospitable tree in the wide solitary plain gave no shelter to conceal horse and man behind it. Unluckily the massy steed was not a Hippogryph, but a heavy-bodied Frieslander, to which, by reason of its make, the happy talent of bearing off its master on the wings of the wind had not been allotted; therefore the gallant hero gave his soul to the keeping of God and the Holy Virgin, and resolved on dying like a knight. He bade his servants follow him, and sell their lives as dear as might be. Thereupon he pricked the Frieslander boldly forward, and dashed right into the middle of the hostile squadron, who had been expecting no such sudden onset from a single knight. The Pagans started in astonishment, and flew asunder like light chaff when scattered by the wind. But seeing that the enemy was only three men strong, their courage rose, and there began an unequal battle, in which valour was surpassed by number. The Count meanwhile kept plunging yarely through the ranks; the point of his lance gleamed death and destruction to the Infidel; and when it found its man, he flew inevitably from his saddle. Their Captain himself, who ran at him with grim fury, his manly arm laid low, and with his victorious spear transfixed him writhing in the dust, as St. George of England did the Dragon. The mettled Kurt went on with no less briskness; though availing little for attack, he was a master in the science of despatching, and sent all to pot who did not make resistance; as a modern critic butchers the defenceless rabble of the lame and halt, who venture with such courage in our days into the literary tilt-yard: and if now and then some fainting invalid, with furious aim, like an exasperated Reviewer-hunter, did hurl a stone at him with enfeebled fist, he heeded it little; for he knew well that his basnet and iron jack would turn a moderate thump. The groom, too, did his best to make clear ground about him, and kept his master's back unharmed. But as nine gad-flies will beat the strongest horse; four Caffre bulls an African

lion; and, by the common tale, one troop of mice an archbishop, as the *Mäusethurm*, or Mouse-tower, on the Rhine, by Hübner's account, gives open testimony; so the Count of Gleichen, after doing knightly battle, was at length overpowered by the number of his enemies. His arm grew weary, his lance was shivered into splinters, his sword became blunt, and his Friesland horse at last staggered down upon the gory battle-field. The Knight's fall was the watchword of victory; a hundred valiant arms stormed in on him to wrench away his sword, and his hand had no longer any strength for resistance. As the mettled Kurt observed the Knight come down, his own courage sank also, and along with it the pole-axe, wherewith he had so magnanimously hammered in the Saracenic skulls. He surrendered at discretion, and pressingly entreated quarter. The groom stood in blank rumination; bore himself enduringly; and awaited with oxlike equanimity the stroke of some mace upon his basnet, which should crush him to the ground.

But the Saracens were less inhuman victors than the conquered could have expected; they disarmed their three prisoners of war, and did them no bodily harm whatever. This mild usage took its rise not in any movement of philanthropy, but in mere spy's-mercy; from a dead enemy there is nothing to be learnt, and the special object of this roaming troop had been to get correct intelligence about the state of matters in the Christian host at Ptolemais. The captives, being questioned and heard, were next, according to the Asiatic fashion, furnished with slave fetters; and as a ship was just then lying ready to set sail for Alexandria, the Bey of Asdod sent them off with it as a present to the Sultan of Egypt, to confirm at Court their description of the Christian resources and position. The rumour of the bold Frank's valour had arrived before him at the gates of Grand Cairo; and so pugnacious a prisoner might, on entering the hostile metropolis, have merited as pompous a reception as the Twelfth of April saw bestowed upon the Comte de Grasse in

London, where the merry capital emulously strove to let the conquered sea-hero feel the honour which their victory had done him: but Moslem self-conceit allows no justice to foreign merit. Count Ernst, in the garb of a felon, loaded with heavy chains, was quietly locked into the Grated Tower, where the Sultan's slaves were wont to be kept.

Here, in long painful nights, and mournful solitary days, he had time and leisure to survey the grim stony aspect of his future life; and it required as much steadfastness and courage to bear up under these contemplations, as to tilt it on the battle-field among a wandering horde of Arabs. The image of his former domestic happiness kept hovering before his eyes; he thought of his gentle wife, and the tender shoots of their chaste love. Ah! how he cursed the miserable feud of Mother-church with the Gog and Magog of the East, which had robbed him of his fair lot in existence, and fettered him in slave-shackles never to be loosed! In such moments he was ready to despair altogether; and his piety had wellnigh made shipwreck on this rock of offence.

In the days of Count Ernst there was current, among anecdotic persons, a wondrous story of Duke Henry the Lion, which at that period, as a thing that had occurred within the memory of man, found great credence in the German Empire. The Duke, so runs the tale, while proceeding over sea to the Holy Land, was, in a tempest, cast away upon a desert part of the African coast; where, escaping alone from shipwreck, he found shelter and succour in the den of a hospitable Lion. This kindness in the savage owner of the cave had its origin not in the heart, but in the left hind-paw; while hunting in the Libyan wilderness, he had run a thorn into his foot, which so tormented him, that he could hardly move, and had entirely forgotten his natural voracity. The acquaintance being formed, and mutual confidence established between the parties, the Duke assumed the office of chirurgeon to the royal beast, and laboriously picked out the thorn from his foot. The patient rapidly recovered, and, mindful of the

service, entertained his lodger with his best from the produce of his plunder; and, though a Lion, was as friendly and officious towards him as a lap-dog.

The Duke, however, soon grew weary of the cold collations of his four-footed landlord, and began to long for the flesh-pots of his own far-distant kitchen; for in readying the game handed in to him, he by no means rivalled his Brunswick cook. Then the home-sickness came upon him like a heavy load; and seeing no possibility of ever getting back to his paternal heritage, the thought of this so grieved his soul, that he wasted visibly, and pined like a wounded hart. Thereupon the Tempter, with his wonted impudence in desert places, came before him, in the figure of a little swart wrinkled manikin, whom the Duke at first sight took for an ourang-outang; but it was the Devil himself, Satan in proper person, and he grinned, and said: "Duke Henry, what ails thee? If thou trust to me, I will put an end to all thy sorrow, and take thee home to thy wife to sup with her this night in the Castle of Brunswick; for a lordly supper is making ready there, seeing she is about to wed another man, having lost hope of thy life."

This despatch came rolling like a thunder-clap into the Duke's ear, and cut him through the heart like a sharp two-edged sword. Rage burnt in his eyes like flames of fire, and desperation uproared in his breast. If Heaven will not help me in this crisis, thought he, then let Hell! It was one of those entangling situations which the Arch-crimp, with his consummate skill in psychological science, can employ so dextrously when the enlisting of a soul that he has cast an eye on is to prosper in his hands. The Duke, without hesitation, buckled on his golden spurs, girded his sword about his loins, and put himself in readiness. "Quick, my good fellow!" said he; "carry me, and this my trusty Lion, to Brunswick, before the varlet reach my bed!"—"Well!" answered Blackbeard, "but dost thou know the carriage-dues?"—"Ask what thou wilt!" said Duke Henry; "it

shall be given thee at thy word."—"Thy soul at sight in the other world," replied Beelzebub.—"Done! Be it so!" cried furious jealousy, from Henry's mouth.

The bargain was forthwith concluded in legal form, between the two contracting parties. The Infernal Kite directly changed himself into a winged Griffin, and seizing the Duke in the one clutch, and the trusty Lion in the other, conveyed them both in one night from the Libyan coast to Brunswick, the towering city, founded on the lasting basis of the Harz, which even the lying prophecies of the Zillerfeld vaticinator have not ventured to overthrow. There he set down his burden safely in the middle of the market-place, and vanished, just as the watchman was blowing his horn with intent to proclaim the hour of midnight, and then carol forth a superannuated bridal-song from his rusty mum-washed weasand. The ducal palace, and the whole city, still gleamed like the starry heaven with the nuptial illumination; every street resounded with the din and tumult of the gay people streaming forward to gaze on the decorated bride, and the solemn torch-dance with which the festival was to conclude. The Aeronaut, unwearied by his voyage, pressed on amid the crowding multitude, through the entrance of the Palace; advanced with clanking spurs, under the guidance of his trusty Lion, to the banquet-chamber; drew his sword, and cried: "With me, whoever stands by Duke Henry; and to traitors, death and hell!" The Lion also bellowed, as if seven thunders had been uttering their united voices; shook his awful mane, and furiously erected his tail, as the signal of attack. The cornets and kettle-drums struck silent suddenly, and a horrid sound of battle pealed from the tumult in the wedding-hall, up to the very Gothic roof, till the walls rang with it, and the thresholds shook.

The golden-haired bridegroom, and his party-coloured butterflies of courtiers, fell beneath the sword of the Duke, as the thousand Philistines beneath the ass's jaw-bone, in the sturdy fist of the son of Manoah; and he who escaped the

sword, rushed into the Lion's throat, and was butchered like a defenceless lamb. When the forward wooer and his retinue of serving-men and nobles were abolished, Duke Henry, having used his household privilege as sternly as of old the wise Ulysses to the wooing-club of his chaste Penelope, sat down to table, refreshed in spirit, beside his wife, who was just beginning to recover from the deadly fright his entrance had caused her. While briskly enjoying the dainties of his cook, which had not been prepared for him, he cast a glance of triumph on his new conquest, and perceived that she was bathed in ambiguous tears, which might as well refer to loss as to gain. However, like a man that knew the world, he explained them wholly to his own advantage; and merely reproving her in gentle words for the hurry of her heart, he from that hour entered upon all his former rights.

Count Ernst had often listened to this strange story, from the lips of his nurse; yet in riper years, as an enlightened sceptic, entertained doubts of its truth. But in the dreary loneliness of his Grated Tower, the whole incident acquired a form of possibility, and his wavering nursery belief increased almost to conviction. A transit through the air appeared to him the simplest thing in nature, if the Prince of Darkness, in the gloomy midnight, chose to lend his bat-wings for the purpose. Though in obedience to his religious principles, he no night neglected to cut a large cross before him as he went to sleep; yet a secret longing awoke in his heart, without its own distinct consciousness, to accomplish the same adventure. If a wandering mouse in the night-season happened to scratch upon the wainscot, he immediately supposed the Hellish Proteus was announcing his arrival, and at times in thought he went so far as settling the freight charges beforehand. But except the illusion of a dream, which juggled him into an aerial journey to his German native land, the Count gained nothing by his nursery faith, except employing with these fantasies a few vacant hours; and like a reader of

novels, transporting himself into the situation of the acting hero. Why old Abaddon showed himself so sluggish in this case, when the kidnapping of a soul was in the wind, and in all likelihood the enterprise must have succeeded, may be accounted for in two ways. Either the Count's Guardian Angel was more watchful than the one to whom Duke Henry had intrusted the keeping of his soul, and resisted so stoutly that the Evil One could get no advantage over him; or the Prince of the Air had grown disgusted with the transport-trade in this his own element, having been bubbled out of his stipulated freightage by Duke Henry after all their engagements; for when it came to the point with Henry, his soul was found to have so many good works on her side of the account, that the scores on the Infernal tally were altogether cancelled by them.

Whilst Count Ernst was weaving in romantic dreams a feeble shadow of hope for deliverance from his captivity, and for a few moments in the midst of them forgetting his dejection and misery, his returning servants brought the Countess tidings that their master had vanished from the camp, and none knew what had become of him. Some supposed that he had been the prey of snakes or dragons; others that a pestilential blast of wind had met him in the Syrian desert, and killed him; others that he had been robbed and murdered, or taken captive, by some plundering troop of Arabs. In one point all agreed: That he was to be held *pro mortuo*, dead in law, and that the Countess was entirely relieved and enfranchised from her matrimonial engagements. But to the Countess herself, a secret foreboding still whispered that her lord was alive notwithstanding. Nor did she by any means repress this thought, which so solaced her heart; for hope is always the stoutest stay of the afflicted, and the sweetest dream of life. To maintain it, she secretly equipped a trusty servant, and sent him out for tidings, over sea into the Holy Land. Like the raven from the Ark, this scout flew to and fro upon the waters, and was no more heard of. Then she

sent another forth; who returned after several years' cruising over sea and land; but no olive-leaf of hope was in his bill. Nevertheless the steadfast lady doubted not in the least that she should yet meet her lord in the land of the living: for she had a firm persuasion that so tender and true a husband could not possibly have left the world without in the catastrophe remembering his wife and little children at home, and giving them some token of his death. Now, since the Count's departure, there had nothing happened in the Castle; neither in the armoury by rattling of the harness, nor in the garret by a rolling joist, nor in the bed-chamber by a faint footstep, or heavy-booted tread. Nor had any nightly moaning chanted its *Nænia* down from the high battlements of the palace; nor had the baleful bird Kreideweiss ever issued its lugubrious death-summons. In the absence of all these signs of evil omen, she inferred by the principles of female common-sense philosophy, which even in our own times are by no means fallen into such desuetude among the fair sex, as Father Aristotle's *Organum* is among the male, that her much-loved husband was still living; a conclusion which we know was perfectly correct. The fruitless issue of her first two missions of discovery, the object of which was more important to her than the finding of the Southern Polar Continent is to us, she allowed not in the least to deter her from sending out a third Apostle into All the World. This third was of a slow turn, and had imprinted on his mind the adage, *As soon gets the snail to his bed as the swallow;* therefore he called at every inn, and treated himself well. And it being infinitely more convenient that the people whom he was to question about his master should come to him, than that he should go tracking and spying them out in the wide world, he determined on choosing a position where he could examine every passenger from the East, with the insolent inquisitiveness of a toll-man behind his barrier; and fixed his quarters by the harbour of Venice. This Queen of the Waters was at that time, as it were, the general gate, which

all pilgrims and crusaders from the Holy Land passed through in their way home. Whether this shrewd genius chose the best or the worst means for discharging his appointed function, will appear in the sequel.

After a seven-years narrow custody in the Grated Tower at Grand Cairo,—a term which to the Count seemed far longer than to the Seven Sleepers their seventy-years sleep in the Roman catacombs,—he concluded himself to be forsaken of Heaven and Hell, and utterly gave up hope of ever getting out in the body from this melancholy cage, where the kind face of the sun was not allowed to visit him, and the broken daylight struggling faintly in through a window secured with iron bars. His devil-romance was long ago concluded; and his faith in miraculous assistance from his Guardian Saint was lighter than a mustard-seed. He vegetated rather than lived; and if in these circumstances any wish arose in him, it was the wish to be annihilated.

From this lethargic stupor he was suddenly aroused by the rattling of a bunch of keys, before the door of his cell. Since the day of his entrance, his jailor had never more performed for him the office of turnkey; for all the necessaries of the prisoner had been conveyed through a trap-board in the door. Accordingly, it was not without long resistance, and the bribery of a little vegetable-oil, that the rusty bolt obeyed him. But the creaking of the iron hinges, as the door went up with reluctant grating, was to the Count a compound of more melodious notes than ever came from the Harmonica of Franklin. A foreboding palpitation of the heart set his stagnant blood in motion; and he expected with impatient longing the intelligence of a change in his fate: for the rest, it was indifferent to him whether it brought life or death. Two black slaves entered with his jailor, at whose signal they loosed the fetters from the prisoner; and a second mute sign from the solemn greybeard commanded him to follow. He obeyed with faltering steps; his feet refused their service, and he needed the support of the two slaves, to totter down the

winding stone stair. He was then conducted to the Captain of the Prison, who, looking at him with a reproachful air, thus spoke: "Obstinate Frank, what made thee hide the craft thou art acquainted with, when thou wert put into the Grated Tower? One of thy fellow-prisoners has betrayed thee, and informed us that thou art a master in the art of gardening. Go, whither the will of the Sultan calls thee; lay out a garden in the manner of the Franks, and watch over it like the apple of thy eye; that the Flower of the World may blossom in it pleasantly, for the adorning of the East."

If the Count had got a call to Paris to be Rector of the Sorbonne, the appointment could not have astonished him more, than this of being gardener to the Sultan of Egypt. About gardening he understood as little as a laic about the secrets of the Church. In Italy, it is true, he had seen many gardens; and at Nürnberg, where the dawn of that art was now first penetrating into Germany, though the horticultural luxury of the Nürnbergers did not yet extend much farther than a bowling-green, and a few beds of roman lettuce. But about the planning of gardens, and the cultivation of plants, like a martial nobleman, he had never troubled his head; and his botanic science was so limited, that the Flower of the World had never once come under his inspection. Hence he knew not in the least by what method it was to be treated; whether like the aloe it must be brought to blossom by the aid of art, or like a common marigold by the genial virtue of nature alone. Nevertheless, he did not venture to acknowledge his ignorance, or decline the preferment offered him; being reasonably apprehensive that they might convince him of his fitness for the post, by a bastinading on the soles.

A pleasant park was assigned him, which he was to change into a European garden. The spot had, either by the hand of bountiful Nature, or of ancient cultivation, been so happily disposed and ornamented already, that the new Abdalonymus,

let him cudgel his brains as he would, could perceive no error or defect in it, nothing that admitted of improvement. Besides, the aspect of living and active nature, which for seven long years in his dreary prison he had been obliged to forego, affected him at once so powerfully, that he inhaled rapture from every grass-flower, and looked at all things around him with delight, like the First Man in Paradise, to whom the scientific thought of censuring anything in the arrangement of his Eden did not occur. The Count therefore found himself in no small embarrassment about discharging his commission creditably; he feared that every change would rob the garden of a beauty, and were he detected as a botcher, he must travel back into his Grated Tower.

In the mean time, as Shiek Kiamel, Overseer of the Gardens and favourite of the Sultan, was diligently stimulating him to begin the work, he required fifty slaves, as necessary for the execution of his enterprise. Next morning at dawn, they were all ready, and passed muster before their new commander, who as yet saw not how he should employ a man of them. But how great was his joy as he perceived the mettled Kurt and the ponderous Groom, his two companions of misfortune, ranked among the troop! A hundredweight of lead rolled off his heart, the wrinkle of dejection vanished from his brow, and his eyes were enlightened, as if he had dipt his staff in honey and tasted thereof. He led the trusty Squire aside, and frankly informed him into what a heterogeneous element he had been cast by the caprices of fate, where he could neither fly nor swim; nor could he in the least comprehend what enigmatical mistake had exchanged his knightly sword with the gardener's spade. No sooner had he done speaking, than the mettled Kurt, with wet eyes, fell at his feet, then lifted up his voice and said: "Pardon, dear master! It is I that have caused your perplexity and your deliverance from the rascally Grated Tower, which has kept you so long in ward. Be not angry that the innocent deceit of your servant has brought you out of it; be glad rather that you

see God's sky again above your head. The Sultan required a garden after the manner of the Franks, and had proclamation made to all the Christian captives in the Bazam, that the proper man should step forth, and expect great recompense if the undertaking prospered. No one of them durst meddle with it; but I recollected your heavy durance. Then some good spirit whispered me the lie of announcing you as an adept in the art of gardening, and it has succeeded perfectly. And now never vex yourself about the way of managing the business: the Sultan, like the great people of the world, has a fancy not for something better than he has already, but for something different, that may be new and singular. Therefore, delve and devastate, and cut and carve, in this glorious field, according to your pleasure; and depend upon it, everything you do or purpose will be right in his eyes."

This speech was as the murmur of a running brook in the ears of a tired wanderer in the desert. The Count drew balsam to his soul from it, and courage to commence with boldness the ungainly undertaking. He set his men to work at random, without plan; and proceeded with the well-ordered shady park, as one of your "bold geniuses" proceeds with an antiquated author, who falls into his creative hands, and, nill he will he, must submit to let himself be modernised, that is to say, again made readable and likeable; or as a new pedagogue with the ancient forms of the Schools. He jumbled in variegated confusion what he found before him, making all things different, nothing better. The profitable fruit-trees he rooted out, and planted rosemary and valerian, and exotic shrubs, or scentless amaranths, in their stead. The rich soil he dug away, and coated the naked bottom with many-coloured gravel, which he carefully stamped hard, and smoothed like a threshing-floor, that no blade of grass might spring in it. The whole space he divided into various terraces, which he begirt with a hem of green; and through these a strangely-twisted flower-bed serpentised along, and ended in a knot of villainously-smelling boxwood. And as

from his ignorance of botany he paid no heed to the proper seasons for sowing and planting, his garden project hovered for a long time between life and death, and had the aspect of a suit of clothes *à feuille mourante.*

Shiek Kiamel, and the Sultan himself, allowed the Western gardener to take his course, without deranging his conception by their interference or their dictatorial opinion, and by premature hypercriticism interrupting the procedure of his horticultural genius. In this they acted more wisely than our obstreperous public, which, from our famous philanthropic scheme of sowing acorns, expected in a summer or two a stock of strong oaks, fit to be masts for three-deckers; while the plantation was as yet so soft and feeble, that a few frosty nights might have sent it to destruction. Now, indeed, almost in the middle of the second decade of years from the commencement of the enterprise, when the first fruits must certainly be over-ripe, it were in good season for a German Kiamel to step forward with the question: "Planter, what art thou about? Let us see what thy delving, and the loud clatter of thy cars and wheelbarrows have produced?" And if the plantation stood before him like that of the Gleichic Garden at Grand Cairo, in the sere and yellow leaf, then were he well entitled, after due consideration of the matter, like the Shiek, to shake his head in silence, to spit a squirt through his teeth, and think within himself: If this be all, it might have stayed as it was. For one day, as the gardener was surveying his new creation with contentment, sitting in judgment on himself, and pronouncing that the work praised the master, and that, everything considered, it had fallen out better than he could have anticipated, his whole ideal being before his eyes, not only what was then, but what was to be made of it,—the Overseer, the Sultan's favourite, stept into the garden, and said: "Frank, what art thou about? And how far art thou got with thy labour?" The Count easily perceived that the produce of his genius would now have to stand a rigorous criticism; however, he had long been ready for this

accident. He collected all his presence of mind, and answered confidently: "Come, sir, and see! This former wilderness has obeyed the hand of art, and is now moulded, after the pattern of Paradise, into a scene which the Houris would not disdain to select for their abode." The Shiek, hearing a professed artist speak with such apparent warmth and satisfaction of his own performance, and giving the master credit for deeper insight in his own sphere than he himself possessed, restrained the avowal of his discontentment with the whole arrangement, modestly ascribing this dislike to his inacquaintance with foreign taste, and leaving the matter to rest on its own basis. Nevertheless, he could not help putting one or two questions, for his own information; to which the garden satrap was not in the least behindhand with his answers.

"Where are the glorious fruit-trees," began the Shiek, "which stood on this sandy level, loaded with peaches and sweet lemons, which solaced the eye, and invited the promenader to refreshing enjoyment?"

"They are all hewn away by the surface, and their place is no longer to be found."

"And why so?"

"Could the garden of the Sultan admit such trash of trees, which the commonest citizen of Cairo cultivates, and the fruit of which is offered for sale by assloads every day?"

"What moved thee to desolate the pleasant grove of dates and tamarinds, which was the wanderer's shelter against the sultry noontide, and gave him coolness and refection under the vault of its shady boughs?"

"What has shade to do in a garden which, while the sun shoots forth scorching beams, stands solitary and deserted, and only exhales its balsamic odours when fanned by the cool breeze of evening?"

"But did not this grove cover, with an impenetrable veil, the secrets of love, when the Sultan, enchanted by the charms of a fair Circassian, wished to hide his tenderness from the jealous eyes of her companions?"

"An impenetrable veil is to be found in that bower, overarched with honeysuckle and ivy: or in that cool grotto, where a crystal fountain gushes out of artificial rocks into a basin of marble; or in that covered walk with its trellises of clustering vines; or on the sofa, pillowed with soft moss, in the rustic reed-house by the pond; nor will any of these secret shrines afford lodging for destructive worms, and buzzing insects, or keep away the wafting air, or shut up the free prospect, as the gloomy grove of tamarinds did."

"But why hast thou planted sage, and hyssop which grows upon the wall, here on this spot where formerly the precious balm-tree of Mecca bloomed?"

"Because the Sultan wanted no Arabian, but a European garden. In Italy, and in the German gardens of the Nürnbergers, no dates are ripened, nor does any balm-tree of Mecca bloom."

To this last argument no answer could be made. As neither the Shiek nor any of the Heathen in Cairo had ever been at Nürnberg, he had nothing for it but to take this version of the garden from Arabic into German, on the word of the interpreter. Only, he could not bring himself to think that the present horticultural reform had been managed by the pattern of the Paradise, appointed by the Prophet for believing Mussulmans: and, allowing the pretension to be true, he promised to himself, from the joys of the future life, no very special consolation. There was nothing for him, therefore, but, in the way above mentioned, to shake his head, contemplatively squirt a dash of liquid out over his beard, and go the way whence he had come.

The Sultan who at that time swayed the Egyptian sceptre was the gallant Malek al Aziz Othman, a son of the renowned Saladin. The fame of Sultan Malek rests less upon his qualities in the field or the cabinet, than upon the unexampled numerousness of his offspring. Of princes he had so many, that had every one of them been destined to wear a crown, he might have stocked with them all the kingdoms of the

then known world. Seventeen years ago, however, this copious spring had, one hot summer, finally gone dry. Princess Melechsala terminated the long series of the Sultanic progeny; and, in the unanimous opinion of the Court, she was the jewel of the whole. She enjoyed to its full extent the prerogative of youngest children, preference to all the rest; and this distinction was enhanced by the circumstance, that of all the Sultan's daughters, she alone had remained in life; while Nature had adorned her with so many charms, that they enchanted even the paternal eye. For this must in general be conceded to the Oriental Princes, that in the scientific criticism of female beauty they are infinitely more advanced than our Occidentals, who are every now and then betraying their imperfect culture in this point.[1] Melechsala was the pride of the Sultan's family; her brothers themselves were unremitting in attentions to her, and in efforts to outdo each other in affectionate regard. The grave Divan was frequently employed in considering what Prince, by means of her, might be connected, in the bonds of love, with the interest of the Egyptian state. This her royal father made his smallest care; he was solely and incessantly concerned to grant this darling of his heart her every wish, to keep her spirit always in a cheerful mood, that no cloud might overcast the serene horizon of her brow.

The first years of childhood she had passed under the superintendence of a nurse, who was a Christian, and of Italian extraction. This slave had in early youth been kidnapped from the beach of her native town by a Barbary pirate; sold in Alexandria; and, by the course of trade, transmitted from one hand to another, till at last she had arrived at the palace of the Sultan, where her hale constitution recommended her to this office, which she filled with the greatest reputation. Though less tuneful than the French court-nurse, who used to give the signal for a general chorus over all Versailles, whenever she uplifted, with melodious

[1] *Journal of Fashions*, June 1786.

throat, her *Marlborough s'en va-t-en guerre*; yet nature had sufficiently indemnified her by a glibness of tongue, in which she was unrivalled. She knew as many tales and stories as the fair Sheherazade in the Thousand-and-one Nights; a species of entertainment for which it would appear the race of Sultans, in the privacy of their seraglios, have considerable liking. The Princess, at least, found pleasure in it, not for a thousand nights, but for a thousand weeks; and when once a maiden has attained the age of a thousand weeks, she can no longer be contented with the histories of others, for she sees materials in herself to make a history of her own. In process of time, the gifted waiting-woman changed her nursery-tales with the theory of European manners and customs; and being herself a warm patriot, and recollecting her native country with delight, she painted the superiorities of Italy so vividly, that the fancy of her tender nursling became filled with the subject, and the pleasant impression never afterwards faded from her memory. The more this fair Princess grew in stature, the stronger grew in her the love for foreign decoration; and her whole demeanour shaped itself according to the customs of Europe rather than of Egypt.

From youth upwards she had been a great lover of flowers: part of her occupation had consisted in forming, according to the manner of the Arabs, a constant succession of significant nosegays and garlands; with which, in delicate expressiveness, she used to disclose the emotions of her heart. Nay, she at last grew so inventive, that, by combining flowers of various properties, she could compose, and often very happily, whole sentences and texts of the Koran. These she would then submit to her playmates for interpretation, which they seldom failed to hit. Thus one day, for example, she formed with Chalcedonic Lychnis the figure of a heart; surrounded it with white Roses and Lilies; fastened under it two mounting Kingsweeds, enclosing a beautifully marked Anemone between them; and her women, when she showed them the wreath, unanimously read: Innocence of heart is above Birth and

Beauty. She frequently presented her slaves with fresh nosegays: and these flower-donations commonly included praise or blame for their receivers. A garland of Peony-roses censured levity; the swelling Poppy, dulness and vanity; a bunch of odoriferous Hyacinths, with drooping bells, was a panegyric for modesty; the gold Lily, which shuts her leaves at sunset, for prudence; the Marine Convolvulus rebuked eye-service; and the blossoms of the Thorn-Apple, with the Daisy whose roots are poisonous, indicated slander and private envy.

Father Othman took a secret pleasure in this sprightly play of his daughter's fancy, though he himself had no talent for deciphering these witty hieroglyphics, and was frequently obliged to look with the spectacles of his whole Divan before he could pierce their meaning. The exotic taste of the Princess was not hidden from him; and though, as a plain Mussulman, he could not sympathise with her in it, he endeavoured, as a tender and indulgent parent, rather to maintain than to suppress this favourite tendency of his daughter. He fell upon the project of combining her passion for flowers with her preference for foreign parts, and laying out a garden for her in the taste of the Franks. This idea appeared to him so happy, that he lost not a moment in imparting it to his favourite, Shiek Kiamel, and pressing him with the strictest injunctions to realise it as speedily as possible. The Shiek, well knowing that his master's wishes were for him commands, which he must obey without reply, presumed not to mention the difficulties which he saw in the attempt. He himself understood as little about European gardens as the Sultan; and in all Cairo there was no mortal known to him, with whom he might find counsel in the business. Therefore he made search among the Christian slaves for a man skilful in gardening; and lighted exactly on the wrong hand for extricating him from his difficulty. It was no wonder, then, that Shiek Kiamel shook his head contemplatively as he inspected the procedure of this horticultural

improvement; for he was apprehensive, that if it delighted the Sultan as little as it did himself, he might be involved in a heavy responsibility, and his favouriteship, at the very least, might take wings and fly away.

At Court, this project had hitherto been treated as a secret, and the entrance of the place prohibited to every one in the seraglio. The Sultan purposed to surprise his daughter with this present on her birthday; to conduct her with ceremony into the garden, and make it over to her as her own. This day was now approaching; and his Highness had a wish to take a view of everything beforehand, to get acquainted with the new arrangements; that he might give himself the happiness of pointing out in person to his daughter the peculiar beauties of her garden. He communicated this to the Shiek, whom the tidings did not much exhilarate; and who, in consequence, composed a short defensive oration, which he fondly hoped might extricate his head from the noose, if the Sultan showed himself dissatisfied with the appearance of his Christian garden.

"Commander of the Faithful," he purposed to say, "thy nod is the director of my path; my feet hasten whither thou leadest them, and my hand holds fast what thou committest to it. Thou wishedst a garden after the manner of the Franks: here stands it before thy eyes. These untutored barbarians have no gardens; but meagre wastes of sand, which, in their own rude climate, where no dates or lemons ripen, and there is neither Kalaf nor Bahobab,[1] they plant with grass and weeds. For the curse of the Prophet has smitten with perpetual barrenness the plains of the Unbeliever, and forbidden him any foretaste of Paradise, by the perfume of the Mecca balm-tree, or the enjoyment of spicy fruits."

The day was far spent, when the Sultan, attended only by

[1] *Kalaf*, a shrub, from whose blossoms a liquor is extracted, resembling our cherry-water, and much used in domestic medicine. *Bahobab*, a sort of fruit, in great esteem among the Egyptians.

the Shiek, stept into the garden, in high expectation of the wonders he was to behold. A wide unobstructed prospect over a part of the city, and the mirror surface of the Nile with its *Musherns*, *Shamdecks* and *Sheomeons*,[1] sailing to and fro; in the background, the skyward-pointing pyramids, and a chain of blue vapoury mountains, met his eye from the upper terrace, no longer shrouded-in by the leafy grove of palms. A refreshing breath of air was also stirring in the place, and fanning him agreeably. Crowds of new objects pressed on him from every side. The garden had in truth got a strange foreign aspect; and the old park which had been his promenade from youth upwards, and had long since wearied him by its everlasting sameness, was no longer to be recognised. The knowing Kurt had judged wisely, that the charm of novelty would have its influence. The Sultan tried this horticultural metamorphosis not by the principles of a critic, but by its first impression on the senses; and as these are easily decoyed into contentment by the bait of singularity, the whole seemed good and right to him there as he found it. Even the crooked unsymmetrical walks, overlaid with hard stamped gravel, gave his feet an elastic force, and a light firm tread, accustomed as he was to move on nothing else but Persian carpets, or on the soft greensward. He could not satisfy himself with wandering up and down the labyrinthic walks; and he showed himself especially contented with the rich variety of wild-flowers, which had been fostered and cultivated with the greatest care, though they were blossoming of their own accord, outside the wall, with equal luxuriance and in greater multitude.

At last, having placed himself upon a seat, he turned to the Shiek with a cheerful countenance, and said: "Kiamel, thou hast not deceived my expectation: I well anticipated that thou wouldst transform me this old park into something singular, and diverse from the fashion of the land; and now I will not hide my satisfaction from thee. Melechsala

[1] Various sorts of sailing craft in use there.

may accept thy work as a garden after the manner of the Franks."

The Shiek, when he heard his despot talk in this dialect, marvelled much that all things took so well; and blessed himself that he had held his tongue, and retained his defensive oration to himself. Perceiving that the Sultan seemed to look upon the whole as his invention, he directly turned the rudder of his talk to the favourable breeze which was rustling his sails, and spoke thus: "Puissant Commander of the Faithful, be it known to thee that thy obedient slave took thought with himself day and night how he might produce out of this old date-grove, at thy beck and order, something unexampled, the like of which had never been in Egypt before. Doubtless it was an inspiration of the Prophet that suggested the idea of planning it according to the pattern of Paradise; for I trusted, that by so doing I should not fail to meet the intention of thy Highness."

The worthy Sultan's conception of the Paradise, which to all appearance by the course of nature he must soon become possessed of, had still been exceedingly confused; or rather, like the favoured of fortune, who take their ease in this lower world, he had never troubled himself much about the other. But whenever any Dervish or Iman, or other spiritual person, mentioned paradise, some image of his old park used to rise on his fancy; and the park was not by any means his favourite scene. Now, however, his imagination had been steered on quite a different tack. The new picture of his future happiness filled his soul with joy; at least he could now suppose that Paradise might not be so dull as he had hitherto figured it: and believing that he now possessed a model of it on the small scale, he formed a high opinion of the garden; and expressed this forthwith, by directly making Shiek Kiamel a Bey, and presenting him with a splendid caftan. Your thorough-paced courtier belies his nature in no quarter of the world: Kiamel, without the slightest hesitation, modestly appropriated the reward of a service which his

functionary had performed ; not uttering a syllable about him to the Sultan, and thinking him rather too liberally rewarded by a few aspers which he added to his daily pay.

About the time when the Sun enters the Ram, a celestial phenomenon, which in our climates is the watchword for winter to commence his operation but under the milder sky of Egypt announces the finest season of the year, the Flower of the World stept forth into the garden which had been prepared for her, and found it altogether to her foreign taste. She herself was, in truth, its greatest ornament: any scene where she had wandered, had it been a desert in Arabia the Stony, or a Greenland ice-field, would, in the eyes of a gallant person, have been changed into Elysium at her appearance. The wilderness of flowers, which chance had mingled in interminable rows, gave equal occupation to her eye and her spirit: the disorder itself she assimilated, by her sprightly allegories, to methodical arrangement.

According to the custom of the country, every time she entered the garden, all specimens of the male sex, planters, diggers, water-carriers, were expelled by her guard of Eunuchs. The Grace for whom our artist worked was thus hidden from his eyes, much as he could have wished for once to behold this Flower of the World, which had so long been a riddle in his botany. But as the Princess used to overstep the fashions of the East in many points, so by degrees, while she grew to like the garden more and more, and to pay it several visits daily, she began to feel obstructed and annoyed by the attendance of her guard sallying out before her in solemn parade, as if the Sultan had been riding to Mosque in the Bairam festival. She frequently appeared alone, or leaning on the arm of some favourite waiting-woman ; always, however, with a thin veil over her face, and a little rush basket in her hand : she wandered up and down the walks, plucking flowers, which, according to custom, she arranged into emblems of her thoughts, and distributed among her people.

One morning, before the hot season of the day, while the

dewdrops were still reflecting all the colours of the rainbow from the grass, she visited her Tempe to enjoy the cool morning air, just as her gardener was employed in lifting from the ground some faded plants, and replacing them by others newly blown, which he was carefully transporting in flower-pots, and then cunningly inserting in the soil with all their appurtenances, as if by a magic vegetation they had started from the bosom of the earth in a single night. The Princess noticed with pleasure this pretty deception of the senses, and having now found out the secret of the flowers which she plucked away being daily succeeded by fresh ones, so that there was never any want, she thought of turning her discovery to advantage, and instructing the gardener how and when to arrange them, and make them blossom. On raising his eyes, the Count beheld this female Angel, whom he took for the possessor of the garden, for she was encircled with celestial charms as with a halo. He was so surprised by this appearance that he dropped a flower-pot from his hands, forgetful of the precious colocassia contained in it, which ended its tender life as tragically as the Sieur Pilastre de Rosier, though both only fell into the bosom of their mother Earth.

The Count stood petrified like a statue without life or motion; one might have broken off his nose, as the Turks do with stone statues in temples and gardens, and never have aroused him. But the sweet voice of the Princess, who opened her purple lips, recalled him to his senses. "Christian," said she, "be not afraid! It is my blame that thou art here beside me; go forward with thy work, and order thy flowers as I shall bid thee."—"Glorious Flower of the World!" replied the gardener, "in whose splendour all the colours of this blossomy creation wax pale, thou reignest here as in thy firmament, like the Star-queen on the battlements of Heaven. Let thy nod enliven the hand of the happiest among thy slaves, who kisses his fetters, so thou think him worthy to perform thy commands." The Princess had not expected that a slave would open his mouth to her, still less

pay her compliments, and her eyes had been directed rather to the flowers than the planter. She now deigned to cast a glance on him, and was astonished to behold a man of the most noble form, surpassing in masculine grace all that she had ever seen or dreamed of.

Count Ernst of Gleichen had been celebrated for his manly beauty over all Germany. At the tournament of Würzburg, he had been the hero of the dames. When he raised his visor to take air, the running of the boldest spearman was lost for every female eye; all looked on him alone; and when he closed his helmet to begin a course, the chastest bosom heaved higher, and all hearts beat anxious sympathy with the lordly Knight. The partial hand of the Duke of Bavaria's love-sick niece had crowned him with a guerdon, which the young man blushed to receive. His seven years' durance in the Grated Tower, had indeed paled his blooming cheeks, relaxed his firm-set limbs, and dulled the fire of his eyes; but the enjoyment of the free atmosphere, and Labour, the Play-mate of Health, had now made good the loss, with interest. He was flourishing like a laurel, which has pined throughout the long winter in the greenhouse, and at the return of spring sends forth new leaves, and gets a fair verdant crown.

With her predilection for all foreign things, the Princess could not help contemplating with satisfaction the attractive figure of the stranger; and it never struck her that the sight of an Endymion may have quite another influence on a maiden's heart, than the creation of a milliner, set up for show in her booth. With kind gentle voice she gave her handsome gardener orders how to manage the arrangement of his flowers; often asked his own advice respecting it, and talked with him so long as any horticultural idea was in her head. She left him at length, but scarcely was she gone five paces when she turned to give him fresh commissions; and as she took a promenade along the serpentine-walk, she called him again to her, and put new questions to him, and proposed new improvements before she went away. As the day began to

cool, she again felt the want of fresh air, and scarcely had the sun returned to gild the waxing Nile, when a wish to see the awakening flowers unfold their blossoms, brought her back into the garden. Day after day her love of fresh air and awakening flowers increased; and in these visits she never failed to go directly to the place where her florist was labouring, and give him new orders, which he strove punctually and speedily to execute.

One day the Bostangi,[1] when she came to see him, was not to be found; she wandered up and down the intertwisted walks, regardless of the flowers that were blooming around her, and, by the high tints of their colours and the balmy air of their perfumes, as if striving with each other to attract her attention; she expected him behind every bush, searched every branching plant that might conceal him, fancied she should find him in the grotto, and, on his failing to appear, made a pilgrimage to all the groves in the garden, hoping to surprise him somewhere asleep, and enjoying the embarrassment which he would feel when she awoke him; but the head-gardener nowhere met her eye. By chance she came upon the stoical Viet, the Count's Groom, a dull piece of mechanism, whom his master had been able to make nothing out of but a drawer of water. On perceiving her, he wheeled with his water-cans to the left-about, that he might not meet her, but she called him to her, and asked, Where the Bostangi was? "Where else," said he, in his sturdy way, "but in the hands of the Jewish quack-salver, who will sweat the soul from his body in a trice?" These tidings cut the lovely Princess to the heart, for she had never dreamed that it was sickness which prevented her Bostangi from appearing at his post. She immediately returned to her palace, where her women saw, with consternation, that the serene brow of their mistress was overcast, as when the moist breath of the south wind has dimmed the mirror of the sky, and the hovering vapours have collected into clouds. In

[1] Head-gardener.

retiring to the Seraglio, she had plucked a variety of flowers, but all were of a mournful character, and bound with cypress and rosemary, indicating clearly enough the sadness of her mood. She did the same for several days, which brought her council of women into much perplexity, and many deep debates about the cause of their fair Melechsala's grief; but withal, as in female consultations too often happens, they arrived at no conclusion, as in calling for the vote there was such a dissonance of opinions, that no harmonious note could be discovered in them. The truth was, Count Ernst's too zealous efforts to anticipate every nod of the Princess, and realise whatever she expressed the faintest hint of, had so acted on a frame unused to labour, that his health suffered under it, and he was seized with a fever. Yet the Jewish pupil of Galen, or rather the Count's fine constitution, mastered the disease, and in a few days he was able to resume his tasks. The instant the Princess noticed him, the clouds fled away from her brow; and her female senate, to whom her melancholy humour had remained an unexplicable riddle, now unanimously voted that some flower-plant, of whose progress she had been in doubt, had now taken root and begun to thrive,—a conclusion not inaccurate, if taken allegorically.

Princess Melechsala was still as innocent in heart as she had come from the hands of Nature. She had never got the smallest warning or foreboding of the rogueries, which Amor is wont to play on inexperienced beauties. Hitherto, on the whole, there has been a want of *Hints for Princesses and Maidens* in regard to love; though a satisfactory theory of that kind might do infinitely greater service to the world than any *Hints for the Instructors of Princes*;[1] a class of persons who regard no hint, however broad, nay, sometimes take it ill; whereas maidens never fail to notice every hint, and pay heed to it, their perception being finer, and a secret hint precisely their affair. The Princess was still in the first

[1] Allusion to a small Treatise, which, about the time Musæus wrote his story, had appeared under that title.—WIELAND.

novitiate of love, and had not the slightest knowledge of its mysteries. She therefore yielded wholly to her feelings, without scrupling in the least, or ever calling a Divan of the three confidantes of her heart, Reason, Prudence, and Reflection, to deliberate on the business. Had she done so, doubtless the concern she felt in the circumstances of the Bostangi would have indicated to her that the germ of an unknown passion was already vegetating strongly in her heart, and Reason and Reflection would have whispered to her that this passion was *love*. Whether in the Count's heart there was any similar process going on in secret, we have no diplomatic evidence before us: his over-anxious zeal to execute the commands of his mistress might excite some such conjecture; and if so, a bunch of Lovage with a withered stalk of Honesty tied up together, might have befitted him as an allegorical nosegay. Perhaps, however, it was nothing but an innocent chivalrous feeling which occasioned this distinguished alacrity; for in those times it was the most inviolable law of Knighthood, that its professors should in all things rigorously conform to the injunctions of the fair.

No day now passed without the good Melechsala's holding trustful conversation with her Bostangi. The soft tone of her voice delighted his ear, and every one of her expressions seemed to say something flattering to him. Had he been endowed with the self-confidence of a court lord, he would have turned so fair a situation to profit for making farther advances: but he constantly restrained himself within the bounds of modesty. And as the Princess was entirely inexperienced in the science of coquetry, and knew not how to set about encouraging the timid shepherd to the stealing of her heart, the whole intrigue revolved upon the axis of mutual good-will; and might undoubtedly have long continued so revolving, had not Chance, which we all know commonly officiates as *primum mobile* in every change of things, ere long given the scene another form.

About sunset, one very beautiful day, the Princess visited the garden; her soul was as bright as the horizon; she talked

delightfully with her Bostangi about many indifferent matters, for the mere purpose of speaking to him; and after he had filled her flower-basket, she seated herself in a grove, and bound up a nosegay, with which she presented him. The Count, as a mark of reverence to his fair mistress, fastened it, with a look of surprise and delight, to the breast of his waistcoat, without ever dreaming that the flowers might have a secret import; for these hieroglyphics were hidden from his eyes, as from the eyes of a discerning public the secret wheelwork of the famous Wooden Chess-player. And as the Princess did not afterwards expound that secret import, it has withered away with the blossoms, and been lost to the knowledge of posterity. Meanwhile she herself supposed that the language of flowers must be as plain to all mortals, as their mother-tongue; she never doubted, therefore, but her favourite had understood the whole quite right; and as he looked at her with such an air of reverence when he took the nosegay, she accepted his gestures as expressions of modest thanks for the praise of his activity and zeal, which, in all probability, the flowers had been meant to convey. She now took a thought of putting his inventiveness to proof in her turn, and trying whether in this flowery dialect of thanks he could pay a pretty compliment; or, in a word, translate the present aspect of his countenance, which betrayed the feelings of his heart, into flower-writing; and accordingly, she asked him for a nosegay of his composition. The Count, affected by such a proof of condescending goodness, darted to the end of the garden, into a remote greenhouse, where he had established his flower-dépôt, and out of which he was in the habit of transferring his plants to the soil as they came into blossom, without stirring them from their pots. There chanced to be an aromatic plant just then in bloom, a flower named *Mushirumi*,[1] by the Arabs, and which hitherto had not appeared in the garden. With this novelty Count Ernst imagined he might give a little harmless pleasure to his fair

[1] *Hyacinthus Muscari.*

florist; and accordingly, for want of a salver, having put a broad figleaf under it, he held it to her on his knees, with a look expressive of humility, yet claiming a little merit; for he thought to earn a word of praise by it. But, with the utmost consternation, he perceived that the Princess turned away her face, and, so far as he could notice through the veil, cast down her eyes as if ashamed, and looked on the ground, without uttering a word. She hesitated, and seemed embarrassed in accepting it; not deigning to cast a look on it, but laying it beside her on the seat. Her gay humour had departed; she assumed a majestic attitude, announcing haughty earnestness; and after a few moments left the grove, without taking any farther notice of her favourite, not, however, leaving her *Mushirumi* behind her, but carefully concealing it under her veil.

The Count was thunderstruck at this enigmatical catastrophe; he could not for his life understand the meaning of this behaviour, and continued sitting on his knees, in the position of a man doing penance, for some time after his Princess had left the place. It grieved him to the heart that he should have displeased and alienated this divinity, whom, for her condescending kindness, he venerated as a Saint of Heaven. When his first consternation had subsided, he slunk home to his dwelling, timid and rueful, like a man conscious of some heavy crime. The mettled Kurt had supper on the table; but his master would not bite, and kept forking about in the plate, without carrying a morsel to his lips. By this the trusty *Dapifer* perceived that all was not right with the Count; wherefore he vanished speedily from the room, and uncorked a flask of Chian wine; which Grecian care-dispeller did not fail in its effect. The Count became communicative, and disclosed to his faithful Squire the adventure in the garden. Their speculations on it were protracted to a late hour, without affording any tenable hypothesis for the displeasure of the Princess; and as with all their pondering nothing could be discovered, master and servant betook

them to repose. The latter found it without difficulty; the former sought it in vain, and watched throughout the painful night, till the dawn recalled him to his employments.

At the hour when Melechsala used to visit him, the Count kept an eager eye on the entrance, but the door of the Seraglio did not open. He waited the second day; then the third: the door of the Seraglio was as if walled up within. Had not the Count of Gleichen been a sheer idiot in flower-language, he would readily have found the key to this surprising behaviour of the Princess. By presenting the flower to her, he had, in fact, without knowing a syllable of the matter, made a formal declaration of love, and that in no Platonic sense. For when an Arab lover, by some trusty hand, privily transmits a *Mushirumi* flower to his mistress, he gives her credit for penetration enough to discover the only rhyme which exists in the Arabian language for the word. This rhyme is *Udskerumi*, which, delicately rendered, means *reward of love*.[1] To this invention it must be conceded, that there cannot be a more compendious method of proceeding in the business than this of the *Mushirumi*, which might well deserve the imitation of our Western lovers. The whole insipid scribbling of *Billets-doux*, which often cost their authors so much toil and brain-beating, often when they come into the wrong hand are pitilessly mangled by hard-hearted jesters, often by the fair receivers themselves mistreated or falsely interpreted, might by this means be dispensed with. It need not be objected that the *Mushirumi*, or *Muscadine-hyacinth*, flowers but rarely and for a short time in our climates; because an imitation of it might be made by our Parisian or native gumflower-makers, to supply the wants of lovers at all seasons of the year; and an inland trade in this domestic manufacture might easily afford better profit than our present speculations with America. Nor would a Chevalier in Europe have to dread that the presenting of so eloquent a flower might be charged upon him as a capital

[1] Hasselquist's *Travels in Palestine.*

offence, for which his life might have to answer, as in the East could very simply happen. Had not Princess Melechsala been so kind and soft a soul, or had not omnipotent Love subdued the pride of the Sultan's daughter, the Count, for this flower-gallantry, innocently as on his part it was intended, must have paid with his head. But the Princess was in the main so little indignant at receiving this expressive flower, that on the contrary the fancied proffer struck a chord in her heart, which had long been vibrating before, and drew from it a melodious tone. Yet her virgin modesty was hard put to proof, when her favourite, as she supposed, presumed to entreat of her the reward of love. It was on this account that she had turned away her face at his proposal. A purple blush, which the veil had hidden from the Count, overspread her tender cheeks, her snow-white bosom heaved, and her heart beat higher beneath it. Bashfulness and tenderness were fighting a fierce battle within it, and her embarrassment was such that she could not utter a word. For a time she had been in doubt what to do with the perplexing *Mushirumi*; to disdain it, was to rob her lover of all hope; to accept it, was the promise that his wishes should be granted. The balance of resolution wavered, now to this side, now to that, till at length love decided; she took the flower with her, and this at least secured the Count's head, in the first place. But in her solitary chamber, there doubtless ensued much deep deliberation about the consequences which this step might produce; and the situation of the Princess was the more difficult, that in her ignorance of the concerns of the heart, she knew not how to act of herself; and durst not risk disclosing the affair to any other, if she would not leave the life of her beloved and her own fate at the caprice of a third party.

It is easier to watch a goddess at the bath than to penetrate the secrets of an Oriental Princess in the bedchamber of the Seraglio. It is therefore difficult for the historian to determine whether Melechsala left the *Mushirumi* which she

had accepted of to wither on her dressing-table ; or put it in fresh water, to preserve it for the solace of her eyes as long as possible. In like manner, it is difficult to discover whether this fair Princess spent the night asleep, with gay dreams dancing round her, or awake, a victim to the wasting cares of love. The latter is more probable, since early in the morning there arose great dole and lamentation in the Palace, as the Princess made her appearance with pale cheeks and languid eyes ; so that her female council dreaded the approach of grievous sickness. The Court Physician was called in ; the same bearded Hebrew who had floated off the Count's fever in his sweat-bath ; he was now to examine the pulse of a more delicate patient. According to the custom of the country, she was lying on a sofa, with a large screen in front of it, provided with a little opening, through which she stretched her beautifully turned arm, twice and three times wrapt with fine muslin, to protect it from the profane glance of a masculine eye. "God help me!" whispered the Doctor into the chief waiting-woman's ear : "Things have a bad look with her Highness ; the pulse is quivering like a mouse-tail." At the same time, with practical policy, he shook his head dubitatingly, as cunning doctors are wont ; ordered abundance of Kalaf and other cordials, and with a shrug of the shoulders predicted a dangerous fever.

Nevertheless, these alarming symptoms, which the medical gentleman considered as so many heralds announcing the approach of a malignant distemper, appeared to be nothing more than the consequences of a bad night's-rest ; for the patient having taken her *siesta* about noon, found herself, to the Israelite's astonishment, out of danger in the evening ; needed no more drugs, and by the orders of her Æsculapius was required merely to keep quiet for a day or two. This space she employed in maturely deliberating her intrigue, and devising ways and means for fulfilling the demands of the *Mushirumi*. She was diligently occupied, inventing, proving, choosing and rejecting. One hour fancy smoothed away the

most impassable mountains; and the next, she saw nothing but clefts and abysses, from the brink of which she shuddered back, and over which the boldest imagination could not build a bridge. Yet on all these rocks of offence she grounded the firm resolution to obey the feelings of her heart, come what might; a piece of heroism, not unusual with Mother Eve's daughters; which in the mean time they often pay for with the happiness and contentment of their lives.

The bolted gate of the Seraglio at last went up, and the fair Melechsala again passed through it into the garden, like the gay Sun through the portals of the East. The Count observed her entrance from behind a grove of ivy; and there began a knocking in his heart, as in a mill; a thumping and hammering as if he had just run a race. Was it joy, was it fear, or anxious expecting of what this visit would announce to him—forgiveness or disfavour? Who can unfold so accurately the heart of man, as to trace the origin and cause of every start and throb in this irritable muscle? In short, Count Ernst did feel considerable palpitations of the heart, so soon as he descried the Princess from afar; but of their Whence or Why, he could give his own mind no account. She very soon dismissed her suite; and from all the circumstances it was clear that poetical anthology was not her business in the present case. She bent her course to the grove; and as the Count was not playing hide-and-seek with much adroitness or zeal, she found him with great ease. While she was still at some distance, he fell upon his knees with mute eloquence before her, not venturing to raise his eyes, and looked as ruefully as a delinquent when the judge is ready to pass sentence on him. The Princess, however, with a soft voice and friendly gesture, said to him: "Bostangi, rise and follow me into this grove." Bostangi obeyed in silence; and she having taken her seat, spoke thus: "The will of the Prophet be done! I have called on him three days and three nights long, to direct me by a sign if my conduct were wavering between error and folly. He is silent; and approves the purpose of the Ringdove to

free the captive Linnet from the chain with which he toilsomely draws water, and to nestle by his side. The Daughter of the Sultan has not disdained the *Mushirumi* from thy fettered hand. My lot is cast! Loiter not in seeking the Iman, that he lead thee to the Mosque, and confer on thee the Seal of the Faithful. Then will my Father, at my request, cause thee to grow as the Nile-stream, when it oversteps its narrow banks, and pours itself into the valley. And when thou art governing a Province as its Bey, thou mayst confidently raise thy eyes to the throne: the Sultan will not reject the son-in-law whom the Prophet has appointed for his daughter."

Like the conjuration of some potent Fairy, this address again transformed the Count into the image of a stone statue; he gazed at the Princess without life or motion; his cheeks grew pale, and his tongue was chained. On the whole, he had caught the meaning of the speech: but how he was to reach the unexpected honour of becoming the Sultan of Egypt's son-in-law was an unfathomable mystery. In this predicament, he certainly, for an accepted wooer, did not make the most imposing figure in the world; but awakening love, like the rising sun, coats everything with gold. The Princess took his dumb astonishment for excess of rapture, and attributed his visible perplexity of spirit to the overwhelming feeling of his unexpected success. Yet in her heart there arose some virgin scruples lest she might have gone too fast to work with the ultimatum of the courtship, and outrun the expectations of her lover; therefore she again addressed him, and said: "Thou art silent, Bostangi? Let it not surprise thee that the perfume of thy *Mushirumi* breathes back on thee the odour of my feelings; in the curtain of deceit my heart has never been shrouded. Ought I by wavering hope to increase the toil of the steep path, which thy foot must climb before the bridal chamber can be opened to thee?"

During this speech the Count had found time to recover

his senses; he roused himself, like a warrior from sleep when the alarm is sounded in the camp. "Resplendent Flower of the East," said he, "how shall the tiny herb that grows among the thorns presume to blossom under thy shadow? Would not the watchful hand of the gardener pluck it out as an unseemly weed, and cast it forth, to be trodden under foot on the highway, or withered in the scorching sun? If a breath of air stir up the dust, that it soil thy royal diadem, are not a hundred hands in instant employment wiping it away? How should a slave desire the precious fruit, which ripens in the garden of the Sultan for the palate of Princes? At thy command I sought a pleasant flower for thee, and found the *Mushirumi*, the name of which was as unknown to me, as its secret import still is. Think not that I meant aught with it but to obey thee."

This response distorted the fair plan of the Princess very considerably. She had not expected that it could be possible for a European not to combine with the *Mushirumi*, when presented to a lady, the same thought which the two other quarters of the world unite with it. The error was now clear as day; but love, which had once for all taken root in her heart, now dextrously winded and turned the matter; as a seamstress does a piece of work which she has cut wrong, till at last she makes ends meet notwithstanding. The Princess concealed her embarrassment by the playing of her fair hands with the hem of her veil; and, after a few moments' silence, she said, with gentle gracefulness: "Thy modesty resembles the night-violet, which covets not the glitter of the sun, yet is loved for its aromatic odour. A happy chance has been the interpreter of thy heart, and elicited the feelings of mine. They are no longer hid from thee. Follow the doctrine of the Prophet, and thou art on the way to gain thy wish."

The Count now began to perceive the connection of the matter more and more distinctly; the darkness vanished from his mind by degrees, as the shades of night before the

dawn. Here, then, the Tempter, whom, in the durance of the Grated Tower, he had expected under the mask of a horned satyr, or a black shrivelled gnome, appeared to him in the figure of winged Cupid, and was employing all his treacherous arts, persuading him to deny his faith, to forsake his tender spouse, and forget the pledges of her chaste love. "It stands in thy power," said he, "to change thy iron fetters with the kind ties of love. The first beauty in the world is smiling on thee, and with her the enjoyment of all earthly happiness! A flame, pure as the fire of Vesta, burns for thee in her bosom, and would waste her life, should folly and caprice overcloud thy soul to the refusing her favour. Conceal thy faith a little while under the turban; Father Gregory has water enough in his absolution-cistern to wash thee clean from such a sin. Who knows but thou mayest earn the merit of saving the pure maiden's soul, and leading it to the Heaven for which it was intended?" To this deceitful oration the Count would willingly have listened longer, had not his good Angel twitched him by the ear, and warned him to give no farther heed to the voice of temptation. So he thought that he must not speak with flesh and blood any longer, but by one bold effort gain the victory over himself. The word died away more than once in his mouth; but at last he took heart, and said: "The longing of the wanderer, astray in the Libyan wilderness, to cool his parched lips in the fountains of the Nile, but aggravates the torments of his thirsty heart, when he must still languish in the torrid waste. Therefore think not, O best and gentlest of thy sex, that such a wish has awakened within me, which, like a gnawing worm, would consume my heart, since I could not nourish it with hope. Know that, in my home, I am already joined by the indissoluble tie of marriage to a virtuous wife, and her three tender children lisp their father's name. How could a heart, torn asunder by sadness and longing, aspire to the Pearl of Beauty, and offer her a divided love?"

This explanation was distinct; and the Count believed that, as it were by one stroke, and in the spirit of true knighthood, he had ended this strife of love. He conceived that the Princess would now see her over-hasty error, and renounce her plan. But here he was exceedingly mistaken. The Princess could not bring herself to think that the Count, a young blooming man, could be without eyes for her; she knew that she was lovely; and this frank exposition of the state of his heart made no impression on her whatever. According to the fashion of her country, she had no thought of appropriating to herself the sole possession of it; for, in the parabolic sport of the Seraglio, she had often heard, that man's love is like a thread of silk, which may be split and parted, so that every filament shall still remain a whole. In truth, a sensible similitude; which the wit of our Occidental ladies has never yet lighted on! Her father's Harem had also, from her earliest years, set before her numerous instances of sociality in love; the favourites of the Sultan lived there with one another in the kindest unity.

"Thou namest me the Flower of the World," replied the Princess; "but behold, in this garden there are many flowers blossoming beside me, to delight eye and heart by their variety of loveliness; nor do I forbid thee to partake in this enjoyment along with me. Should I require of thee, in thy own garden, to plant but a single flower, with the constant sight of which thy eye would grow weary? Thy wife shall be sharer of the happiness I am providing for thee; thou shalt bring her into thy Harem; to me she shall be welcome; for thy sake she shall become my dearest companion, and for thy sake she will love me in return. Her little children also shall be mine; I will give them shade, that they bud pleasantly, and take root in this foreign soil."

The doctrine of Toleration in Love has, in our enlightened century, made far slower progress than that of Toleration in Religion; otherwise this declaration of the Princess could not seem to my fair readers so repulsive, as in all probability it

will. But Melechsala was an Oriental; and under that mild sky, Megæra Jealousy has far less influence on the lovelier half of the species than on the stronger; whom, in return, she does indeed rule with an iron sceptre.

Count Ernst was affected by this meek way of thinking; and who knows what he might have resolved on, could he have depended on an equal liberality of sentiment from his Ottilia at home, and contrived in any way to overleap the other stone of stumbling which fronted him,—the renunciation of his creed? He by no means hid this latter difficulty from the goddess who was courting him so frankly; and, easy as it had been for her to remove all previous obstacles, the present was beyond her skill. The confidential session was adjourned, without any settlement of this contested point. When the conference broke up, the proposals stood as in a frontier conference between two neighbouring states, where neither party will relinquish his rights, and the adjustment of the matter is postponed to another term, while the commissioners in the interim again live in peace with each other, and enjoy good cheer together.

In the secret conclave of the Count, the mettled Kurt, as we know, had a seat and vote; his master opened to him in the evening the whole progress of his adventure, for he was much disquieted; and it is very possible that some spark of love may have sputtered over from the heart of the Princess into his, too keen for the ashes of his lawful fire to quench. An absence of seven years, the relinquished hope of ever being re-united with the first beloved, and the offered opportunity of occupying the heart as it desires, are three critical circumstances, which, in so active a substance as love, may easily produce a fermentation that shall quite change its nature. The sagacious Squire pricked up his ears at hearing of these interesting events; and, as if the narrow passage of the auditory nerves had not been sufficient to convey the tidings fast enough into his brain, he likewise opened the wide doorway of his mouth, and both heard and tasted the

unexpected news with great avidity. After maturely weighing everything, his vote ran thus: To lay hold of the seeming hope of release with both hands, and realise the Princess's plan; meanwhile, to do nothing either for it or against it, and leave the issue to Heaven. "You are blotted out from the book of the living," said he, "in your native land; from the abyss of slavery there is no deliverance, if you do not hitch yourself up by the rope of love. Your spouse, good lady, will never return to your embraces. If, in seven years, sorrow for your loss has not overpowered her and cut her off, Time has overpowered her sorrow, and she is happy by the side of another. But, to renounce your religion! That is a hard nut, in good sooth; too hard for you to crack. Yet there are means for this, too. In no country on Earth is it the custom for the wife to teach the husband what road to take for Heaven; no, she follows his steps, and is led and guided by him as the cloud by the wind; looks neither to the right hand nor to the left, nor behind her, like Lot's wife, who was changed into a pillar of salt: for where the husband arrives, there is her abode. I have a wife at home, too; but think you, if I were stuck in Purgatory, she would hesitate to follow me, and waft fresh air upon my poor soul with her fan? So, depend on it, the Princess will renounce her false Prophet. If she love you truly, she will, to a certainty, be glad to change her Paradise for ours."

The mettled Kurt added much farther speaking to persuade his master that he ought not to resist this royal passion, but to forget all other ties, and free himself from his captivity. It did not strike him, that by his confidence in the affection of his wife, he had recalled to his master's memory the affection of his own amiable spouse; a remembrance which it was his object to abolish. The heart of the Count felt crushed as in a press; he rolled to this side and that on his bed; and his thoughts and purposes ran athwart each other in the strangest perplexity, till, towards morning, wearied out by this internal tumult, he fell into a dead sleep.

He dreamed that his fairest front-tooth had dropped out, at which he felt great grief and heaviness of heart; but on looking at the gap in the mirror, to see whether it deformed him much, a fresh tooth had grown forth in its place, fair and white as the rest, and the loss could not be observed. So soon as he awoke, he felt a wish to have his dream interpreted. The mettled Kurt soon hunted out a prophetic Gipsy, who by trade read fortunes from the hand and brow, and also had the talent of explaining dreams. The Count related his to her in all its circumstances; and the dingy wrinkled Pythoness, after meditating long upon it, opened her puckered mouth, and said: "What was dearest to thee death has taken away, but fate will soon supply thy loss."

Now, then, it was plain that the sage Squire's suppositions had been no idle fancies, but that the good Ottilia, from sorrow at the loss of her beloved husband, had gone down to the grave. The afflicted widower, who as little doubted of this tragic circumstance as if it had been notified to him on black-edged paper with seal and signature, felt all that a man who values the integrity of his jaw must feel when he loses a tooth, which bountiful Nature is about to replace by another; and comforted himself under this dispensation with the well-known balm of widowers: "It is the will of God; I must submit to it!" And now, holding himself free and disengaged, he bent all his sails, hoisted his flags and streamers, and steered directly for the haven of happy love. At the next interview, he thought the Princess lovelier than ever; his looks languished towards her, and her slender form enchanted his eye, and her light soft gait was like the gait of a goddess, though she actually moved the one foot past the other, in mortal wise, and did not, in the style of goddesses, come hovering along the variegated sand-walk with unbent limbs. "Bostangi," said she, with melodious voice, "hast thou spoken to the Iman?" The Count was silent for a moment; he cast down his beaming eyes, laid his hand submissively on his breast, and sank on his knee before her. In this humble

attitude, he answered resolutely: "Exalted daughter of the Sultan! my life is at thy nod, but not my faith. The former I will joyfully offer up to thee; but leave me the latter, which is so interwoven with my soul, that only death can part them." From this, it was apparent to the Princess that her fine enterprise was verging towards shipwreck; wherefore she adopted a heroical expedient, undoubtedly of far more certain effect than our animal magnetism, with all its renowned virtues: she unveiled her face. There stood she, in the full radiance of beauty, like the Sun when he first raised his head from Chaos to hurl his rays over the gloomy Earth. Soft blushes overspread her cheeks, and higher purple glowed upon her lips; two beautifully-curved arches, on which love was sporting like the many-coloured Iris on the rainbow, shaded her spirit-speaking eyes; and two golden tresses kissed each other on her lily breast. The Count was astonished and speechless; the Princess addressed him, and said:

"See, Bostangi, whether this form pleases thy eyes, and whether it deserves the sacrifice which I require of thee."

"It is the form of an Angel," answered he, with looks of the highest rapture, "and deserves to shine, encircled with a glory, in the courts of the Christian Heaven, compared with which, the delights of the Prophet's Paradise are empty shadows."

These words, spoken with warmth and visible conviction, found free entrance into the open heart of the Princess: especially the glory, it appeared to her, must be a sort of head-dress that would sit not ill upon the face. Her quick fancy fastened on this idea, which she asked to have explained; and the Count with all eagerness embraced this opportunity of painting the Christian Heaven to her as charming as he possibly could; he chose the loveliest images his mind would suggest; and spoke with as much confidence as if he had descended directly from the place on a mission to the Princess. Now, as it has pleased the Prophet to endow the fair sex with very scanty expectations in the other world, our apostolic

preacher failed the less in his intentions; though it cannot be asserted that he was preëminently qualified for the missionary duty. But whether it were that Heaven itself favoured the work of conversion, or that the foreign tastes of the Princess extended to the spiritual conceptions of the Western nations, or that the person of this Preacher to the Heathen mixed in the effect, certain it is she was all ear, and would have listened to her pedagogue with pleasure for many hours longer, had not the approach of night cut short their lesson. For the present, she hastily dropped her veil, and retired to the Seraglio.

It is a well-known fact, that the children of princes are always very docile, and make giant steps in every branch of profitable knowledge, as our Journals often plainly enough testify; while the other citizens of this world must content themselves with dwarf steps. It was not surprising, therefore, that the Sultan of Egypt's daughter had in a short space mastered the whole synopsis of Church doctrine as completely as her teacher could impart it, bating a few heresies, which, in his inacquaintance with the delicate shades of faith, he had undesignedly mingled with it. Nor did this acquisition remain a dead letter with her; it awakened the most zealous wish for proselytising. Accordingly, the plan of the Princess had now in so far altered, that she no longer insisted on converting the Count, but rather felt inclined to let herself be converted by him; and this not only in regard to unity in faith, but also to the purposed unity in love. The whole question now was, by what means this intention could be realised. She took counsel with Bostangi, he with the mettled Kurt, in their nocturnal deliberations on this weighty matter; and the latter voted distinctly to strike the iron while it was hot; to inform the fair proselyte of the Count's rank and birth; propose to her to run away with him; instantly to cross the water for the European shore; and live together in Thuringia as Christian man and wife.

The Count clapped loud applause to this well-grounded

scheme of his wise Squire; it was as if the mettled Kurt had read it in his master's eyes. Whether the fulfilment of it might be clogged with difficulties or not, was a point not taken into view in the first fire of the romantic project: Love removes all mountains, overleaps walls and trenches, bounds across abyss and chasm, and steps the barrier of a city as lightly as it does a straw. At the next lecture, the Count disclosed the plan to his beloved catechumena.

"Thou reflection of the Holy Virgin," said he, "chosen of Heaven from an outcast people, to gain the victory over prejudice and error, and acquire a lot and inheritance in the Abodes of Felicity, hast thou the courage to forsake thy native country, then prepare for speedy flight. I will guide thee to Rome, where dwells the Porter of Heaven, St. Peter's deputy, to whom are committed the keys of Heaven's gate; that he may receive thee into the bosom of the Church, and bless the covenant of our love. Fear not that thy father's potent arm may reach us; every cloud above our heads will be a ship manned with angelic hosts, with diamond shields and flaming swords; invisible indeed to mortal eye, but armed with heavenly might, and appointed to watch and guard thee. Nor will I conceal any longer, that I am, by birth and fortune, all that the Sultan's favour could make me; a Count, that is a Bey born, who rules over land and people. The limits of my lordship include towns and villages; palaces also and strongholds. Knights and squires obey me; horses and carriages stand ready for my service. In my native land, thou thyself, enclosed by no walls of a seraglio, shalt live and rule in freedom as a queen."

This oration of the Count the Princess thought a message from above; she entertained no doubts of his truth; and it seemed to please her that the Ringdove was to nestle, not beside a Linnet, but beside a bird of the family of the Eagle. Her warm fancy was filled with such sweet anticipations, that she consented, with all the alacrity of the Children of Israel, to forsake the land of Egypt, as if a new Canaan, in another

quarter of the world, had been waiting her beyond the sea. Confident in the protection of the unseen life-guard promised to her, she would have followed her conductor from the precincts of the Palace forthwith, had he not instructed her that many preparations were required, before the great enterprise could be engaged in with any hope of a happy issue.

Among all privateering transactions by sea or land, there is none more ticklish, or combined with greater difficulties, than that of kidnapping the Grand Signior's favourite from his arms. Such a masterstroke could only be imagined by the teeming fancy of a W*z*l,[1] nor could any but a Kakerlak achieve it. Yet the undertaking of Count Ernst of Gleichen to carry off the Sultan of Egypt's daughter, was environed with no fewer difficulties; and as these two heroes come, to a certain extent, into competition in this matter, we must say, that the adventure of the Count was infinitely bolder, seeing everything proceeded merely by the course of Nature, and no serviceable Fairy put a finger in the pie: nevertheless, the result of both these corresponding enterprises, in the one as well as in the other, came about entirely to the wish of parties. The Princess filled her jewel-box sufficiently with precious stones; changed her royal garment with a Kaftan; and one evening, under the safe-conduct of her beloved, his trusty Squire and the phlegmatic Water-drawer, glided forth from the Palace into the Garden, unobserved, to enter on her far journey to the West. Her absence could not long remain concealed; her women sought her, as the proverb runs, like a lost pin; and as she did not come to light, the alarm in the Seraglio became boundless. Hints here and there had already been dropped, and surmises made, about the private audiences of the Bostangi; supposition and fact were strung together; and the whole produced, in sooth, no row of pearls, but the horrible discovery of the real nature of the case. The Divan

[1] J. K. Wetzel, author of some plays and novels; among the latter, of *Kakerlak*.—Ed.

of Dames had nothing for it but to send advice of the occurrence to the higher powers. Father Sultan, whom the virtuous Melechsala, everything considered, might have spared this pang, and avoided flying her country to make purchase of a glory, demeaned himself at this intelligence like an infuriated lion, who shakes his brown mane with dreadful bellowing, when by the uproar of the hunt, and the baying of the hounds, he is frightened from his den. He swore by the Prophet's beard that he would utterly destroy every living soul in the Seraglio, if at sunrise the Princess were not again in her father's power. The Mameluke guard had to mount, and gallop toward the four winds, in chase of the fugitives, by every road from Cairo; and a thousand oars were lashing the broad back of the Nile, in case she might have taken a passage by water.

Under such efforts, to elude the far-stretching arm of the Sultan was impossible, unless the Count possessed the secret of rendering himself and his travelling party invisible; or the miraculous gift of smiting all Egypt with blindness. But of these talents neither had been lent him. Only the mettled Kurt had taken certain measures, which, in regard to their effect, might supply the place of miracles. He had rendered his flying caravan invisible, by the darkness of an unlighted cellar in the house of Adullam the sudorific Hebrew. This Jewish Hermes did not satisfy himself with practising the healing art to good advantage, but drew profit likewise from the gift which he had received by inheritance from his fathers; and thus honoured Mercury in all his three qualities, of Patron to Doctors, to Merchants, and to Thieves. He drove a great trade in spiceries and herbs with the Venetians, from which he had acquired much wealth; and he disdained no branch of business whereby anything was to be made. This worthy Israelite, who for money and money's worth, stood ready, without investigating moral tendencies, for any sort of deed, the trusty Squire had prevailed on, by a jewel from the casket of the Princess, to undertake the transport of the Count,

whose rank and intention were not concealed from him, with three servants, to a Venetian ship that was loading at Alexandria; but it had prudently been hidden from him, that in the course of this contraband transaction, he must smuggle out his master's daughter. On first inspecting his cargo, the figure of the fair youth struck him somewhat; but he thought no ill of it, and took him for a page of the Count's. Ere long the report of the Princess Melechsala's disappearance sounded over all the city: then Adullam's eyes were opened; deadly terror took possession of his heart, so that his grey beard began to stir, and he wished with all his soul that his hands had been free of this perilous concern. But now it was too late; his own safety required him to summon all his cunning, and conduct this breakneck business to a happy end. In the first place, he laid his subterranean lodgers under rigorous quarantine; and then, after the sharpest of the search was over, the hope of finding the Princess considerably faded, and the zeal in seeking for her cooled, he packed the whole caravan neatly up in four bales of herbs, put them on board a Nile-boat, and sent them with a proper invoice, under God's guidance, safe and sound to Alexandria; where, so soon as the Venetian had gained the open sea, they were liberated, all and sundry, from their strait confinement in the herb-sacks.[1]

Whether the celestial body-guard, with diamond shields and flaming swords, posted on a gorgeous train of clouds, did follow the swift ship, could not now, as they were invisible, be properly substantiated in a court of justice; yet there are not wanting symptoms in the matter which might lead to some such conjecture. All the four winds of Heaven seem to have combined to make the voyage prosperous; the adverse held their breath; and the favourable blew so gaily in the

[1] The invention of travelling in a sack was several times employed during the Crusades. Dietrich the Hard-bestead, Markgraf of Meissen (Misnia), returned from Palestine to his hereditary possessions, under this incognito, and so escaped the snares of the Emperor Henry VI., who had an eye to the productive mines of Freyberg.—M.

sails, that the vessel ploughed the soft-playing billows with the speed of an arrow. The friendly moon was stretching her horns from the clouds for the second time, when the Venetian, glad in heart, ran into moorings in the harbour of his native town.

Countess Ottilia's watchful spy was still at Venice; undismayed by the fruitless toil of vain inquiries, from continuing his diets of examination, and diligently questioning all passengers from the Levant. He was at his post when the Count, with the fair Melechsala, came on land. His master's physiognomy was so stamped upon his memory, that he would have undertaken to discover it among a thousand unknown faces. Nevertheless the foreign garb, and the finger of Time, which in seven years produces many changes, made him for some moments doubtful. To be certain of his object, he approached the stranger's suite, made up to the trusty Squire, and asked him: "Comrade, whence come you?"

The mettled Kurt rejoiced to meet a countryman, and hear the sound of his mother-tongue; but saw no profit in submitting his concerns to the questioning of a stranger, and answered briefly: "From sea."

"Who is the gentleman thou followest?"

"My master."

"From what country come you?"

"From the East."

"Whither are you going?"

"To the West."

"To what province?"

"To our home."

"Where is it?"

"Miles of road from this."

"What is thy name?"

"Start-the-game, that is my name. Strike-for-a-word, people call my sword. Sorrow-of-life, so hight my wife. Rise, Lig-a-bed, she cries to her maid. Still-at-a-stand, that is my man. Hobbletehoy, I christened my boy. Lank-i'-

the-bag, I scold my nag. Shamble-and-stalk, we call his walk. Trot-i'-the-bog, I whistle my dog. Saw-ye-that, so jumps my cat. Snug-in-the-rug, he is my bug. Now thou knowest me, with wife and child, and all my household."

"Thou seemest to me to be a queer fellow."

"I am no fellow at all, for I follow no handicraft."

"Answer me one question."

"Let us hear it."

"Hast thou any news of Count Ernst of Gleichen, from the East?"

"Wherefore dost thou ask?"

"Therefore."

"Twiddle, twaddle! Wherefore, therefore!"

"Because I am sent into all the world by the Countess Ottilia his wife, to get her word whether her husband is still living, and in what corner of the Earth he may be found."

This answer put the mettled Kurt into some perplexity; and tuned him to another key. "Wait a little, neighbour," said he; "perhaps my master knows about the thing." Thereupon he ran to the Count, and whispered the tidings in his ear. The feeling they awoke was complex; made up in equal proportions of joy and consternation. Count Ernst perceived that his dream, or the interpretation of it, had misled him; and that the conceit of marrying his fair travelling companion might easily be baulked. On the spur of the moment he knew not how he should get out of this embroiled affair: meanwhile, the desire to learn how matters stood at home outweighed all scruples. He beckoned to the emissary, whom he soon recognised for his old valet; and who wetted with joyful tears the hand of his recovered master, and told in many words what jubilee the Countess would make, when she received the happy message of her husband's return. The Count took him with the rest to the inn; and there engaged in earnest meditation on the singular state of his heart, and considered deeply what was to be done with his engagements to the fair Saracen. Without loss of time the

watchful spy was despatched to the Countess with a letter, containing a true statement of the Count's fortunes in slavery at Cairo, and of his deliverance by means of the Sultan's daughter; how she had abandoned throne and country for his sake, under the condition that he was to marry her, which he himself, deceived by a dream, had promised. By this narrative he meant not only to prepare his wife for a participatress in her marriage rights; but also endeavoured, in the course of it, by many sound arguments, to gain her own consent to the arrangement.

Countess Ottilia was standing at the window in her mourning weeds, as the news-bringer for the last time gave his breathless horse the spur, to hasten it up the steep Castle-path. Her sharp eye recognised him in the distance; and he too being nothing of a blinkard,—a class of persons very rare in the days of the Crusades,—recognised the Countess also, raised the letter-bag aloft over his head, and waved it like a standard in token of good news; and the lady understood his signal, as well as if the Hanau *Synthematograph* had been on duty there. "Hast thou found him, the husband of my heart?" cried she, as he approached. "Where lingers he, that I may rise and wipe the sweat from his brow, and let him rest in my faithful arms from his toilsome journeying?"—"Joy to you, my lady," said the post; "his lordship is well. I found him in the Port of Venice, from which he sends you this under his hand and seal, to announce his arrival himself." The Countess could not hastily enough undo the seal; and at sight of her husband's hand, she felt as if the breath of life were coming back to her. Three times she pressed the letter to her beating heart, and three times touched it with her languishing lips. A shower of joyful tears streamed over the parchment, as she began reading: but the farther she read, the drops fell the slower; and before the reading was completed, the fountain of tears had dried up altogether.

The contents of the letter could not all interest the good

lady equally; her husband's proposed partition treaty of his heart had not the happiness to meet with her approval. Greatly as the spirit of partition has acquired the upper hand nowadays, so that parted love and parted provinces have become the device of our century; these things were little to the taste of old times, when every heart had its own key, and a master-key that would open several was regarded as a scandalous thief-picklock. The intolerance of the Countess in this point was at least a proof of her unvarnished love: "Ah! that doleful Crusade," cried she, "is the cause of it all. I lent the Holy Church a Loaf, of which the Heathen have eaten; and nothing but a Crust of it returns to me." A vision of the night, however, soothed her troubled mind, and gave her whole view of the affair another aspect. She dreamed that there came two pilgrims from the Holy Sepulchre up the winding Castle-road, and begged a lodging, which she kindly granted them. One of them threw off his cloak, and behold it was the Count her lord! She joyfully embraced him, and was in raptures at his return. The children too came in, and he clasped them in his paternal arms, pressed them to his heart, and praised their looks and growth. Meanwhile his companion laid aside his travelling pouch; drew from it golden chains and precious strings of jewelry, and hung them round the necks of the little ones, who showed delighted with these glittering presents. The Countess was herself surprised at this munificence, and asked the stranger who he was. He answered: "I am the Angel Raphael, the guide of the loving, and have brought thy husband to thee out of foreign lands." His pilgrim garments melted away; and a shining angel stood before her, in an azure robe, with two golden wings on his shoulders. Thereupon she awoke, and, in the absence of an Egyptian Sibyl, herself interpreted the dream according to her best skill; and found so many points of similarity between the Angel Raphael and the Princess Melechsala, that she doubted not the latter had been shadowed forth to her in vision under the

figure of the former. At the same time she took into consideration the fact that, without her help, the Count could scarcely ever have escaped from slavery. And as it behoves the owner of a lost piece of property to deal generously with the finder, who might have kept it all to himself, she no longer hesitated to resolve on the surrender. The water-bailiff, well rewarded for his watchfulness, was therefore despatched forthwith back into Italy, with the formal consent of the Countess for her husband to complete the trefoil of his marriage without loss of time.

The only question now was, whether Father Gregory at Rome would give his benediction to this matrimonial anomaly; and be persuaded, for the Count's sake, to refound, by the word of his mouth, the substance, form and essence of the Sacrament of Marriage. The pilgrimage accordingly set forth from Venice to Rome, where the Princess Melechsala solemnly abjured the Koran, and entered into the bosom of the Church. At this spiritual conquest the Holy Father testified as much delight as if the kingdom of Antichrist had been entirely destroyed, or reduced under subjection to the Romish chair; and after the baptism, on which occasion she had changed her Saracenic name for the more orthodox *Angelica*, he caused a pompous *Te-deum* to be celebrated in St. Peter's. These happy aspects Count Ernst endeavoured to improve for his purpose, before the Pope's good-humour should evaporate. He brought his matrimonial concern to light without delay: but, alas! no sooner asked than rejected. The conscience of St. Peter's Vicar was so tender in this case, that he reckoned it a greater heresy to advocate triplicity in marriage than Tritheism itself. Many plausible arguments as the Count brought forward to accomplish an exception from the common rule in his own favour, they availed no jot in moving the exemplary Pope to wink with one eye of his conscience, and vouchsafe the petitioned dispensation: a result which cut Count Ernst to the heart. His sly counsel, the mettled Kurt, had in the mean time struck out a bright

expedient for accomplishing the marriage of his master with the fair convert, to the satisfaction of the Pope and Christendom in general; only he had not risked disclosing it, lest it might cost him his master's favour. Yet at last he found his opportunity, and put the matter into words. "Dear master," said he, "do not vex yourself so much about the Pope's perverseness. If you cannot get round him on the one side, you must try him on the other: there are more roads to the wood than one. If the Holy Father has too tender a conscience to permit your taking two wives, then it is fair for you also to have a tender conscience, though you are no priest but a layman. Conscience is a cloak that covers every hole, and has withal the quality that it can be turned according to the wind: at present, when the wind is cross, you must put the cloak on the other shoulder. Examine whether you are not related to the Countess Ottilia within the prohibited degrees: if so, as will surely be the case, if you have a tender conscience, then the game is your own. Get a divorce; and who the deuce can hinder you from wedding the Princess then?"

The Count had listened to his Squire till the sense of his oration was completely before him; then he answered it with two words, shortly and clearly: "Peace, Dog!" In the same moment, the mettled Kurt found himself lying at full length without the door, and seeking for a tooth or two which had dropped from him in this rapid transit. "Ah! the precious tooth," cried he from without, "has been sacrificed to my faithful zeal!" This tooth monologue reminded the Count of his dream. "Ah! the cursed tooth," cried he from within, "which I dreamed of losing, has been the cause of all this mischief!" His heart, between self-reproaches for unfaithfulness to his amiable wife, and for prohibited love to the charming Angelica, kept wavering like a bell, which yields a sound on both sides, when set in motion. Still more than the flame of his passion, the fire of indignation burnt and gnawed him, now that he saw the visible impossibility

of ever keeping his word to the Princess, and taking her in wedlock. All which distresses, by the way, led him to the just experimental conclusion, that a parted heart is not the most desirable of things; and that the lover, in these circumstances, but too much resembles the Ass Baldwin between his two bundles of hay.

In such a melancholy posture of affairs, he lost his jovial humour altogether, and wore the aspect of an atrabiliar, whom in bad weather the atmosphere oppresses till the spleen is like to crush the soul out of his body. Princess Angelica observed that her lover's looks were no longer as yesterday, and ere-yesterday: it grieved her soft heart, and moved her to resolve on making trial whether she should not be more successful, if she took the dispensation business in her own hand. She requested audience of the conscientious Gregory; and appeared before him closely veiled, according to the fashion of her country. No Roman eye had yet seen her face, except the priest who baptized her. His Holiness received the new-born daughter of the Church with all suitable respect, offered her the palm of his right hand to kiss, and not his perfumed slipper. The fair stranger raised her veil a little to touch the sacred hand with her lips; then opened her mouth, and clothed her petition in a touching address. Yet this insinuation through the Papal ear seemed not sufficiently to know the interior organisation of the Head of the Church; for instead of taking the road to the heart, it passed through the other ear out into the air. Father Gregory expostulated long with the lovely supplicant; and imagined he had found a method for in some degree contenting her desire of union with a bridegroom, without offence to the ordinations of the Church: he proposed to her a spiritual wedlock, if she could resolve on a slight change of the veil, the Saracenic for the Nun's. This proposal suddenly awakened in the Princess such a horror at veils, that she directly tore away her own; sank full of despair before the holy footstool, and with uplifted hands

and tearful eyes, conjured the venerable Father by his sacred slipper, not to do violence to her heart, and constrain her to bestow it elsewhere.

The sight of her beauty was more eloquent than her lips; it enraptured all present; and the tear which gathered in her heavenly eye fell like a burning drop of naphtha on the Holy Father's heart, and kindled the small fraction of earthly tinder that still lay hid there, and warmed it into sympathy for the petitioner. "Rise, beloved daughter," said he, "and weep not! What has been determined in Heaven, shall be fulfilled in thee on Earth. In three days thou shalt know whether this thy first prayer to the Church can be granted by that gracious Mother, or must be denied." Thereupon he summoned an assembly of all the casuists in Rome; had a loaf of bread and a bottle of wine distributed to each; and locked them up in the Rotunda, with the warning that no one of them should be let out again till the question had been determined unanimously. So long as the loaves and wine held out, the disputes were so violent, that all the Saints, had they been convened in the church, could not have argued with greater noise. But so soon as the Digestive Faculty began to have a voice in the meeting, he was listened to with the deepest attention, and happily he spoke in favour of the Count, who had got a sumptuous feast made ready for the entertainment of the casuistic Doctors, when the Papal seal should be removed from their door. The Bull of Dispensation was drawn out in proper form of law; in furtherance of which the fair Angelica had, not at all reluctantly, inflicted a determined cut upon the treasures of Egypt. Father Gregory bestowed his benediction on the noble pair, and sent them away betrothed. They lost no time in leaving Peter's Patrimony for the territories of the Count, to celebrate their nuptials on arriving.

When Count Ernst, on this side the Alps, again inhaled his native air, and felt it come soft and kindly round his heart, he mounted his steed; galloped forward, attended only

by the heavy Groom, and left the Princess, under the escort of the mettled Kurt, to follow him by easy journeys.

His heart beat high within him, when he saw in azure distance the three towers of Gleichen. He meant to take his gentle Countess by surprise; but the news of his approach had preceded him, as on the wings of the wind; she went forth with man and maid, and met her husband a furlong from the Castle, in a pleasant green, which, in memory of this event, is called the Freudenthal, or Valley of Joy, to this day. The meeting on both sides was as trustful and tender, as if no partition treaty had ever been thought of: for Countess Ottilia was a proper pattern of the pious wife, that obeys without commentary the marriage precept of subjecting her will to the will of her husband. If at times there did arise some small sedition in her heart, she did not on the instant ring the alarm-bell; but she shut door and window, that no mortal eye might look in and see what passed; and then summoned the rebel Passion to the bar of Reason, gave it over in custody to Prudence, and imposed on herself a voluntary penance.

She could not pardon her heart for having murmured at the rival sun that was to shine beside her on the matrimonial horizon; and to expiate the offence, she had secretly commissioned a triple bedstead, with stout fir posts, painted green, the colour of Hope; and a round vaulted tester, in the form of a dome, adorned with winged puffy-cheeked heads of angels. On the silken coverlet, which lay for show over the downy quilts, was exhibited in fine embroidery, the Angel Raphael, as he had appeared to her in vision, beside the Count in pilgrim weeds. This speaking proof of her ready matrimonial complaisance affected her husband to the soul. He clasped her to his breast, and overpowered her with kisses, at the sight of this arrangement for the completion of his wedded joys.

"Glorious wife!" cried he with rapture, "this temple of love exalts thee above thousands of thy sex; as an honourable

memorial, it will transmit thy name to future ages; and while a splinter of this wood remains, husbands will recount to their wives thy exemplary conduct."

In a few days afterwards, the Princess also arrived in safety, and was received by the Count in full gala. Ottilia came to meet her with open arms and heart, and conducted her into the Palace, as the partner in all its privileges. The double bridegroom then set out to Erfurt, for the Bishop to perform the marriage ceremony. This pious prelate was extremely shocked at the proposal, and signified, that in his diocese no such scandal could be tolerated. But, on Count Ernst's bringing out the papal dispensation, signed and sealed in due form, it acted as a lock on his Reverence's lips; though his doubting looks, and shaking of the head, still indicated that the Steersman of the bark of the universal Church had bored a hole in the keel, which bade fair to swamp the vessel, and send it to the bottom of the sea.

The nuptials were celebrated with becoming pomp and splendour; Countess Ottilia, who acted as mistress of the ceremonies, had invited widely; and the counts and knights, over all Thuringia, far and wide, came crowding to assist at this unusual wedding. Before the Count led his bride to the altar, she opened her jewel-box, and consigned to him all its treasures that remained from the expenses of the dispensation, as a dowry; in return for which, he conferred on her the lands of Ehrenstein, by way of jointure. The chaste myrtle twined itself about the golden crown, which latter ornament the Sultan's daughter, as a testimony of her high birth, retained through life; and was, in consequence, invariably named the Queen by her subjects, and by her domestics reverenced and treated like a queen.

If any of my readers ever purchased for himself, for fifty guineas, the costly pleasure of resting a night in Doctor Graham's *Celestial Bed* at London, he may form some slender conception of the Count's delight, when the triple bed at Gleichen opened its elastic bosom to receive the twice-

betrothed, with both his spouses. Seven days long the nuptial festivities continued; and the Count declared himself richly compensated by them for the seven dreary years which he had been obliged to spend in the Grated Tower at Grand Cairo. Nor would this appear to have been an empty compliment on his part to his two faithful wives, if the experimental apophthegm is just, that a single day of gladness sweetens into oblivion the bitter dole and sorrow of a troublous year.

Next to the Count, there was none who relished this exhilarating period better than his trusty Squire, the mettled Kurt, who, in the well-stored kitchen and cellar, found the elements of royal cheer, and stoutly emptied the cup of joy which circulated fast among the servants; while the full table pricked up their ears as he opened his lips, his inner man once satisfied with good things, and began to recount them his adventures. But when the Gleichic economy returned to its customary frugal routine, he requested permission to set out for Ordruff, to visit his kind wife, and overwhelm her with joy at his unexpected return. During his long absence, he had constantly maintained a rigorous fidelity, and he now longed for the just reward of so exemplary a walk and conversation. Fancy painted to his mind's eye the image of his virtuous Rebecca in the liveliest colours; and the nearer he approached the walls which enclosed her, the brighter grew these hues. He saw her stand before him in the charms which had delighted him on his wedding-day; he saw how excess of joy at his happy arrival would overpower her spirits, and she would sink in speechless rapture into his arms.

Encircled with this fair retinue of dreams, he arrived at the gate of his native town, without observing it, till the watchful guardian of public tranquillity let down his beam in front of him, and questioned the stranger, Who he was, what business had brought him to the town, and whether his intentions were peaceable or not? The mettled Kurt gave ready answer; and now rode along the streets at a soft pace, lest his horse's tramp

might too soon betray the secret of his coming. He fastened his beast to the door-ring, and stole, without noise, into the court of his dwelling, where the old chained house-dog first received him with joyful bark. Yet he wondered somewhat at the sight of two lively chub-faced children, like the Angels in the Gleichen bed-tester, frisking to and fro upon the area. He had no time to speculate on the phenomenon, for the mistress of the house, in her carefulness, stept out of doors to see who was there. Alas, what a difference between ideal and original! The tooth of Time had, in these seven years, been mercilessly busy with her charms; yet the leading features of her physiognomy had been in so far spared, that to the eye of the critic, she was still recognisable, like the primary stamp of a worn coin. Joy at meeting somewhat veiled this want of beauty from the mettled Kurt, and the thought that sorrow for his absence had so furrowed the smooth face of his consort put him into a sentimental mood; he embraced her with great cordiality, and said: "Welcome, dear wife of my heart! Forget all thy sorrow. See, I am still alive; thou hast got me back!"

The pious Rebecca answered this piece of tenderness by a heavy thwack on the short ribs, which thwack made the mettled Kurt stagger to the wall; then raised loud shrieks, and shouted to her servants for help against violence, and scolded and stormed like an Infernal Fury. The loving husband excused this unloving reception, on the score of his virtuous spouse's delicacy, which his bold kiss of welcome had offended, she not knowing who he was; and tore his lungs with bawling to undo this error; but his preaching was to deaf ears, and he soon found that there was no misunderstanding in the case. "Thou shameless varlet," cried she, in shrieking treble, "after wandering seven long years up and down the world, following thy wicked courses with other women, dost thou think that I will take thee back to my chaste bed? Off with thee! Did not I publicly cite thee at three church-doors, and wert not thou, for thy contumacious

non-appearance, declared to be dead as mutton? Did not the High Court authorise me to put aside my widow's chair, and marry Bürgermeister Wipprecht? Have not we lived six years as man and wife, and received these children as a blessing of our wedlock? And now comes the Marpeace to perplex my house! Off with thee! Pack, I say, this instant, or the Amtmann shall crop thy ears, and put thee in the pillory, to teach such vagabonds, that run and leave their poor tender wives." This welcome from his once-loved helpmate was a sword's-thrust through the heart of the mettled Kurt; but the gall poured itself as a defence into his blood.

"O thou faithless strumpet!" answered he; "what holds me that I do not take thee and thy bastards, and wring your necks this moment? Dost thou recollect thy promise, and the oath thou hast so often sworn in the trustful marriage-bed, that death itself should not part thee from me? Didst thou not engage, unasked, that should thy soul fly up directly from thy mouth to Heaven, and I were roasting in Purgatory, thou wouldst turn again from Heaven's gate, and come down to me, to fan cool air upon me till I were delivered from the flames? Devil broil thy false tongue, thou gallows carrion!"

Though the Prima Donna of Ordruff was endowed with a glib organ, which, in the faculty of cursing, yielded no whit to that of the tumultuous pretender, she did not judge it good to enter into farther debate with him, but gave her menials an expressive sign; and, in an instant, man and maid seized hold of the mettled Kurt, and *brevi manu* ejected his body from the house; in which act of domestic jurisdiction Dame Rebecca herself bore a hand with the besom, and so swept away this discarded helpmate from the premises. The mettled Kurt, half-broken on the wheel, then mounted his horse, and dashed full gallop down the street, which he had rode along so gingerly some minutes before.

As his blood, when he was on the road home, began to cool, he counted loss and gain, and found himself not ill

contented with the balance; for he found, that except the comfort of having cool air fanned upon his soul in Purgatory after death, his smart amounted to nothing. He never more returned to Ordruff, but continued with the Count at Gleichen all his life, and was an eye-witness of the most incredible occurrence, that two ladies shared the love of one man without quarrelling or jealousy, and this even under one bed-tester! The fair Angelica continued childless, yet she loved and watched over her associate's children as if they had been her own, and divided with Ottilia the care of their education. In the trefoil of this happy marriage, she was the first leaf which faded away in the autumn of life. Countess Ottilia soon followed her; and the afflicted widower, now all too lonely in his large castle and wide bed, lingered but a few months longer. The firmly-established arrangement of these noble spouses in the marriage-bed through life, was maintained unaltered after their death. They rest all three in one grave, in front of the Gleichen Altar, in St. Peter's Church at Erfurt, on the Hill; where their place of sepulture is still to be seen, overlaid with a stone, on which the noble group are sculptured after the life. To the right lies the Countess Ottilia, with a mirror in her hand, the emblem of her praiseworthy prudence; on the left Angelica, adorned with a royal crown; and in the midst, the Count reposing on his coat-of-arms, the lion-leopard.[1] Their famous triple bedstead is still preserved as a relic in the old Castle; it stands in the room called the Junkernkammer, or Knight's Chamber; and a splinter of it, worn by way of busk in a lady's bodice, is said to have the virtue of dispelling every movement of jealousy from her heart.

[1] A plate of this tombstone may be seen in Falkenstein's *Analecta Nordgaviensia*.—M.

FRIEDRICH DE LA MOTTE FOUQUE

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The Baron Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué is of French extraction, but distinguished for the true Germanism of his character, both as a writer and a man; and ranks, for the last twenty years, among the most popular and productive authors of his country.

His family, expelled from France by the Revocation of the Edict of Nantz, appears to have settled at the Hague; from which this branch of it was transferred to Prussia by the fortunes of our Author's grandfather, whose name and title the present Baron has inherited. This first Friedrich, born in the early part of last century, had been sent in boyhood to the Court of Anhalt-Dessau, in the character of Page: he soon quitted this station; entered the Prussian army as a private volunteer; by merit, or recommendation, was gradually advanced; and became acquainted with the Prince Royal, then a forlorn, oppressed and discontented youth, but destined afterwards to astonish and convulse the world, under the name of Frederick the Great. Young La Motte stood in high favour with Frederick; and seems likewise to have shown some prudence in humouring the jealous temper of the old King; for during the Prince's arrest, which had followed his projected elopement from paternal tuition, the Royal Shylock, instead of beheading La Motte, as he had treated poor De Catt, permitted him to visit the disconsolate prisoner, and without molestation to do him kind offices. On his accession to the throne, Frederick the King did not fail, in this instance, to remember the debts of Frederick the Prisoner: the friend of his youth continued to be the friend of his manhood and

age; La Motte rose rapidly from post to post in the army, till, having gained the rank of General, he had opportunity, by various gallant services in the Seven-Years War, to secure the prosperity of his household, and earn for himself a place in the military history of his new country. With his Sovereign he continued in a kindly and honest relation throughout his whole life. His letters, preserved in Frederick's Works, are a proof that he was not only favoured but esteemed: the imperious King is said to have respected his upright and truthful nature; and, though himself a sceptic and a scoffer, never to have interfered in word or deed with the piety and strict religious persuasions of his servant. The General became the founder of that Prussian family, which has since acquired a new and fairer distinction in the person of his grandson.

The present Friedrich, our Author, was born on the 11th of February 1777. Of his early history or habits we have no account, except that he was educated by Hülse; and soon sent to the army as an officer in the Royal Guards. In this capacity he served, during his nineteenth year, in the disastrous campaign of the Rhine. One of his brother officers and intimates here was Heinrich von Kleist, a noble-minded and ill-fated man of genius, whom the mismanagement of a too impetuous and feeling heart has since driven to suicide, before the world had sufficiently reaped the bright promise of his early years.

The misfortunes of his country drove Fouqué back into retirement: while Prussia languished in hopeless degradation under the iron sway of France, he kept himself apart from military life; settled in the country, and hanging up his ineffectual sword, devoted himself to domestic cares and joys, and in the Kingdoms of Imagination sought refuge from the aspect of actual oppression and distress. Of a temper susceptible, lively and devout, his faculties had been quickened by communion with kindred minds; and still more by collision with the vast events which had filled the world with

astonishment, and his portion of it with darkness and obstruction. At this juncture, while contemplating a literary life, it was doubtless a circumstance of no small influence on his future efforts that he became acquainted with August Wilhelm Schlegel. By Schlegel he was introduced to the study of Spanish Poetry; a fact from which a skilful theoriser might plausibly enough deduce the whole psychological history of Fouqué; for it seems as if the beautiful and wondrous spirit of this literature, so fervent yet so joyful, so solemn yet so full of blandishment, with its warlike piety, and gay chivalrous pomp, had taken entire possession of his mind, and moulded his unsettled powers into the form which they have ever since retained. One thing, at all events, is clear without help of theory: An ideal of Christian Knighthood, whencesoever borrowed or derived, has all along, with more or less distinctness, hovered round his fancy; and this it has been the constant task not only of his pen to represent in poetical delineations, but also of his life to realise in external conduct. As to its origin, whether in the poetry of Spain, or in the perplexities of a suffering and religious life, or in the French Revolution and its reaction on a temper abhorrent of its material principles, or in any or all of these causes, it were unprofitable to inquire; for the problem is of no vital importance, and we have not data for even an approximate solution.

Fouqué published his first works under the pseudonym of Pellegrin: he translated the *Numancia* of Cervantes; he wrote *Sigurd*, *Alwin*, *The History of Ritter Galmy*: a small volume of *Dramatic Tales* was published for him by his friend Schlegel. These performances are all of a chivalry cast; attempts to body forth the sentiment with which our Author's mind was already almost exclusively pervaded. Their success was incomplete; sufficient to indicate their object, but not to attain it. The models which he had in view seem still to have awed and overshadowed his poetic faculty; his productions have a southern exotic aspect; and in the opinion of

his critics, it is only in glimpses that a genuine inspiration can be discerned in them. *Der Held des Nordens* (The Hero of the North) a dramatic work in three parts, grounded on the story of the *Nicbelungen Lied*, was the first performance sent forth in his own name; and also the first which showed his genius in its own form, or produced any deep impression on the public. This work was acknowledged to be of true northern growth: it found applauding readers, and had the honour to be criticised in the *Heidelberger Jahrbücher*, by no meaner a person than Jean Paul Friedrich Richter, who bestowed on the poet the surname of *Der Tapfere*, or *The Valiant*, in allusion to the quality which seemed to be the soul of his own character, and of the characters which he portrayed.

The ground thus gained, La Motte Fouqué has not been negligent to make good and extend. Since the date of his first appearance, year after year has duly added its tribute of volumes to the list of his works; he has written in verse and prose, in narrative and representation; his productions varying in form through all the extremes of variety, but animated by the same old spirit, that of Knighthood and Religion. On the whole, he seems to have continued growing in esteem, both with the lower and the upper classes of the literary world. His *Zauberring* (Magic Ring) has lately been translated into English: we have also versions of his *Sintram* and his *Undine*. The last little work, published in 1811, has become a literary pet in its own country; being dandled and patted not only by the soft hands of poetical maidens, but even by the horny paws of *Recensents*, a class of beings to the full as dire and doughty as our own Reviewers. *Undine* and *Sintram* are parts of a series or circuit of "Romantic fictions," entitled the *Jahreszeiten* (Seasons), which were published successively at four different periods: it is from the same work, the Autumn Number of it, that *Aslauga's Knight*, the Tale which follows this Introduction, has been extracted.

The poet had now wedded: and we figure him as happy in

his own Arcadian seclusion; for his lady is a woman of kindred genius, and has added new celebrity to his name by various writings, partly of her own, partly in concert with her husband. In 1813, his poetic leisure was interrupted by the clang of battle-trumpets. Napoleon's star had begun to decline; and Prussia rose, as one man, to break asunder the fetters with which he had so long chained Europe to the dust. The knightly Baron was the first to rouse himself at the voice of his country; he again girded on his harness, and took the field at the head of a small troop of volunteers. His little band would have seemed to have been joined with the Jäger (or, as we call it, Chasseur) Regiment of Brandenburg Cuirassiers; in which squadron he served, first as Lieutenant, then as Rittmeister, with the devout and fervid gallantry, which he had so often previously delineated in his writings. Like the lamented Körner, he stood by the cause both with "the Lyre and the Sword." His arm was ever in the hottest of the battle; and his songs uplifted the triumph of victory, or breathed fresh ardour into the hearts of his comrades in defeat. These lyrical effusions have since been collected and published: for the future historian they will form an interesting memorial. At Culm, the poetical soldier was wounded; but the incompleteness of his cure did not prevent him from appearing in his place on the great day of Leipzig; and thenceforward following the scattered enemy to the banks of the Rhine. Here ill health, arising from excessive exertion, forced him to return: he had toiled faithfully till the struggle was decided; and could now, with a quiet mind, leave others to complete the task. By the King he was raised to the rank of Major, and decorated with the cross of the Order of St. John. He retired to his former residence at Rennhausen, near Rathenau; betook himself again to writing, with unabated diligence; and has since produced, among various other chivalry performances of greater or smaller extent, an "epic poem," entitled *Corona*, celebrating the events in which he himself was present and formed part.

Here, so far as I have understood, he still chiefly resides; enjoying an enviable lot; the domestic society of a virtuous and gifted wife; the exercise of a poetic genius, which his brethren repay with praise; and still dearer honours as a man and a citizen, which his own conscience may declare that he has merited.

Fouqué's genius is not of a kind to provoke or solicit much criticism; for its faults are negative rather than positive, and its beauties are not difficult to discern. The structure of his mind is simple; his intellect is in harmony with his feelings; and his taste seems to include few modes of excellence, which he has not in some considerable degree the power to realise. He is thus in unison with himself; his works are free from internal inconsistency, and appear to be produced with lightness and freedom. A pure sensitive heart, deeply reverent of Truth, and Beauty, and Heroic Virtue; a quick perception of certain forms embodying these high qualities; and a delicate and dainty hand in picturing them forth, are gifts which few readers of his works will contest him. At the same time, it must be granted, he has no preëminence in strength, either of head or heart; and his circle of activity, though full of animation, is far from comprehensive. He is, as it were, possessed by one idea. A few notes, some of them, in truth, of rich melody, yet still a very few, include the whole music of his being. The Chapel and the Tilt-yard stand in the background or the foreground, in all the scenes of his universe. He gives us knights, soft-hearted and strong-armed; full of Christian self-denial, patience, meekness and gay easy daring; they stand before us in their mild frankness with suitable equipment, and accompaniment of squire and dame; and frequently the whole has a true, though seldom a vigorous, poetic life. If this can content us, it is well: if not, there is no help; for change of scene and person brings little change of subject; even when no chivalry is mentioned, we feel too clearly the influence of its unseen presence. Nor can it be said, that in this solitary department his success is of the very

highest sort. To body forth the spirit of Christian Knighthood in existing poetic forms; to wed that old *sentiment* to modern *thoughts*, was a task which he could not attempt. He has turned rather to the fictions and machinery of former days, and transplanted his heroes into distant ages, and scenes divided by their nature from our common world. Their manner of existence comes imaged back to us faint and ineffectual, like the crescent of the setting moon.

These things, however, are not faults, but the want of merits. Where something is effected, it were ungracious to reckon up too narrowly how much is left untried. In all his writings, Fouqué shows himself as a man deeply imbued with feelings of religion, honour and brotherly love; he sings of Faith and Affection with a full heart; and a spirit of tenderness, and vestal purity, and meek heroism, sheds salutary influences from his presence. He is no primate or bishop in the Church Poetical; but a simple chaplain, who merits the honours of a small but well-discharged function, and claims no other.

In mental structure, Fouqué seems the converse of Musäus, whom he follows in the present volume. If Musäus was a man of talent, with little genius, Fouqué is a man of genius, with little more than an ordinary share of talent. His intellect is not richer or more powerful than that of common minds, nor his insight into the world and man's heart more keen; but his feelings are finer, and the touch of an aerial fancy gives life and loveliness to the products of his other powers. Among English authors, we might liken him to Southey; though their provinces of writing are widely diverse; and in regard to general culture and acquirement, the latter must be reckoned greatly his superior. Like Southey, he *finds* more readily than he *invents*; and his invention, when he does trust to it, is apt to be daring rather than successful. Yet his extravagant fictions are pervaded by a true sentiment; a soft vivifying soul looks through them; a religious submission, a cheerful and unwearied patience in affliction; mild, earnest hope and love, and peaceful subdued enthusiasm.

To these internal endowments he adds the merit of a style by no means ill adapted for displaying them. Lightness and simplicity are its chief characteristics: his periods move along in lively rhythm; studiously excluding all pomp of phraseology; expressing his strongest thoughts in the humblest words, and veiling dark sufferings or resolute purposes in a placid smile. A faint superficial gaiety seems to rest over all his images: it is not merriment or humour; but the self-possession of a man too earnestly serious to be heedful of solemn looks; and it plays like sunshine on the surface of a dark pool, deepening by contrast the impressiveness of the gloom which it does not penetrate.

If this little Tale of *Aslauga's Knight*, afford any tolerable emblem of those qualities, the reader will not grudge perusing it. I pretend not to offer it as the best of Fouqué's writings, but only as the best I know of for my present purpose. *Sintram* and *Undine* are already in our language: this tale is weaker in result, but also shorter in compass. That its chivalry is of a still wilder sort than that which we supposed Cervantes had abolished two centuries ago; that its form is thin and unsubstantial, and its effect unsatisfactory, I need not attempt to deny. An extravagant fiction for the basis; delicate, airy and beautiful delineations in the detail; and the everlasting principles of Faith, and Integrity, and Love, pervading the whole: such is frequently the character of Fouqué's writings; and such, on a smaller scale, appears to be that of *Aslauga's Knight*, which is now, with all its imperfections on its head, to be submitted to the courtesy of English judges.

ASLAUGA'S KNIGHT

CHAPTER I

In the Island of Funen, there lived, in old times, a noble gentleman, called Froda the Skalds'-friend; a title which had been given him, because he not only took delight in hospitably entertaining all famous and honourable singers in his fair Castle, but also laboured, with great industry, in collecting any ancient songs, tales, or traditions, which might still be met with in Runic manuscripts, or otherwise. With this view, he had even made some voyages to Iceland, and, in the course of them, fought several bloody battles with the pirates; as indeed he was, in all points, a bold knightly hero, and vied with his great ancestors not only in the matter of poetry, but also of war. He was still a blooming young man; yet all the other nobles of the Island were accustomed to combine in his counsels and follow his banner; nay, his fame had passed over sea, and was known in the neighbouring Empire of Germany. This also was what he wished; for it would have broken his heart, had he thought that of him no songs would be sung, and no tales told, in after days.

One fine autumn evening, this worthy lord was sitting before his Castle, as he often did at that time of day, both that he might have a free view on all sides over land and sea; and also that he might invite any passing traveller to come in with him, and taste his hospitality. However, on the present occasion, he took little notice of the sights he was wont to look at; for an old Book, in artful, beautifully painted characters, had just been sent over to him by a

learned Icelander, and was now lying on his knee. It was the story of Aslauga, the fair daughter of Sigurd, who at first, concealing her high birth, and in mean apparel, had herded goats for some poor peasants; then, in her gold veil of flowing tresses, had pleased King Ragnar Lodbrog, and at last, as his queenly spouse, had adorned the Danish throne till the end of her days.

The Knight Froda felt within his mind as if the graceful Lady Aslauga were rising in life and bodily presence before him; so that his brave still heart, devoted indeed in knightly service to all women, but hitherto untouched with passion for any individual female, now flamed up in bright love for this fair daughter of Sigurd. "What matters it," thought he, "that she has vanished from the Earth long years ago? She still sees so bright and clear into this heart of mine; and what more would a knight desire? Therefore shall she henceforth, for ever and ever, be my gentle dame, and my helper in fight and song." In this mood, he made some verses on his new mistress, which ran as follows:

"They ride and they seek with toil and care,
To find a heart's mistress passing fair;
Through tower and through town they ride and seek,
To find a heart's mistress passing meek;
Where rivers are rolling and mountains rise,
To find a heart's mistress passing wise:
Ah, Knights! ye may seek, and seek full long,
'Tis I have found her in Realms of Song!
I've found her, this mistress, wise, fair, and meek;
How hearts can adore, my sword shall speak:
And should I not see her while toiling Here,
O, Yonder, her form is light and clear;
And dwells she not down in Earth, this love,
Our spirits are one in lands Above.
Good-night, thou old world!—Sweet love, 'tis past!
Who seeketh in faith, will find at last."

"Much depends on fortune, too," said a hollow voice, hard by the Knight; and, on looking round, he observed the form

of a poor peasant woman, so closely shrouded up in grey-coloured wrappings, that he could not see the smallest portion of her face. She was looking over his shoulder into the Book, and she said, with a deep sigh: "I know this story well; and I myself fare no better than the lady it is written of." Froda looked at her with amazement. "Yes indeed, yes indeed," continued she, with strange becks and nods: "Sure, I am the descendant of the great Rolf, to whom the fairest castles, and forests, and fields, of this Island belonged; thy castle, and thy lands, Froda, among others. And now we are sunk into poverty; and because I am not so fair as Aslauga, there is nothing can be done for me, and I am fain to hide my poor face altogether." It seemed as if she wept warm tears under her covering. At this Froda was touched, and he begged of her, for Heaven's sake, to let him know how he might help her; he was a descendant, he said, of the great Northland heroes, and perhaps something more than they, a good Christian. "I almost fancy," murmured she beneath her veil, "that thou art the same Froda whom they name the Good and the Skalds'-friend, and of whose mildness and greatness of mind they tell such strange stories. If it is so, I may still find help. Thou hast but to give me the half of thy fields and meadows; I should then be in something like a state to live as beseemeth the descendant of the great Rolf."

Then Froda looked thoughtfully on the ground, both because she had asked so much, and because he was considering whether she could be in truth descended from the mighty Rolf. But after a short pause, the veiled woman said: "I must be mistaken, then, it seems; and thou art not that far-famed, gentle-hearted Froda. Would Froda have thought so long over such a trifle! But I will try the utmost. See, for the fair Aslauga's sake, of whom thou hast been reading, and wert just singing; for the sake of Sigurd's bright daughter, fulfil my petition."

Then Froda started up with a glowing heart, and cried:

"Let it be as thou hast said!" and held out to her his knightly hand, in confirmation. But he could not grasp the fingers of the woman, though her dim shape continued standing close by him. At this, a secret shudder began to creep over his frame, while suddenly a light seemed to issue from the form; a golden light, which covered her as with a dazzling garment; and he felt in his mind as if Aslauga were standing before him, clothed in the waving veil of her gold hair, and looking on him with a kind smile. Transported and blinded, he sank on his knee. On again rising up, he saw nothing but an autumn cloud passing over the meadows, fringed in its outline with the last brightness of twilight, and then disappearing far off among the waves of the sea.

The Knight knew not what to make of this occurrence. In deep reflection, he returned to his apartments; at one time thinking for certain that he had seen Aslauga herself; at another, that some goblin had risen before him with deceitful juggleries, mocking, in spiteful wise, the service which he had vowed to the departed lady. But, thenceforth, whether he was passing over dale, and heath, and forest, or sailing on the sea billows, suchlike appearances frequently met him. Once he found a cithern lying in the wood, and scared off a wolf from it; and while the cithern of itself broke forth into sweet tones, a fair baby rose out of it, as of old Aslauga herself had done, when found in a similar manner. At other times, he would see goats clambering among the cliffs by the shore, and a golden form as if herding them; then again a resplendent queen in a glittering bark would seem to glide past him, and salute him with smiles. And still, when he tried to get near aught of this, it was vapour, and cloud, and air. A poet might sing many songs of these things. So much, however, he gathered from it, that the fair dame, Aslauga, had accepted his service, and that he had in deed and in truth become her knight.

CHAPTER II

During these things, winter had come on, and again passed away. In northern countries, this young season of the year, to those who understand it and know how to love it, is always wont to bring along with it a crowd of most fair and expressive images; with which, if you speak of earthly enjoyment, many a man might content himself for his whole earthly life. But at this time, when the spring came glancing forth with its budding leaves and its streaming brooks, there came likewise from the German Empire a most flowery and sunshiny piece of tidings over to Funen.

On the rich banks of the Mayn, where he pours his flood through the blessed land of Franconia, there stood an almost royal fortress, the orphan heiress of which was a relative of the German Kaiser. She was called Hildegardis, and acknowledged far and wide for the fairest of virgins. Now, her Imperial uncle wished also that she should wed the boldest Knight that could be found far and wide, and no other than the boldest. Accordingly, he followed the example of many noble chiefs in such cases, and appointed a Tournament, in which the first prize should be the hand of the lovely Hildegardis, provided that the victor were not already married, or occupied in his heart with some other fair friend. For the lists were not to be shut against any knightly warrior of proper bearing and birth, that the contest of courage and strength to be displayed might be so much the richer. Of all this, Froda's German brethren wrote him full accounts, and he made ready for appearing at the festival.

Before all, he forged for himself a gallant suit of mail, as indeed, among the whole armourers of the North, a region famed on this account, he was the most expert. The helmet he worked of pure gold, and formed it in such a way that it looked on all parts like mere clustering locks, recalling to his

mind the golden hair of Aslauga. Thus, also, he fashioned on the breast-plate of his harness, which was coated with silver, a gold shape in half-relief, representing Aslauga in her tressy veil; to make it clear to all at the commencement of the Tourney, that this Knight, bearing on his breast the figure of a lady, was fighting not for the hand of the fair Hildegardis, but for the joy of battle and knightly honour.

Then he led his gay Danish horse from its stall, put it carefully on shipboard, and sailed over in safety.

CHAPTER III

In one of those fair boxwood thickets, which you often see in the kind lands of Germany, he once fell in with a young friendly Knight, of delicate form; who having just, in the gayest manner, spread out his repast on the green sward, under the shadow of pleasant boughs, invited the brave Northman to partake of it. As the two were here dining cheerfully together, they felt a kindness in their hearts towards one another; and rejoiced to observe, on rising, that their present destinations led them both the same road. Not that they had signified this in words; on the contrary, the young Knight, whose name was Edwald, was of an extremely taciturn nature, so that he could sit for hours with a quiet smile on his face, and never once open his mouth. But in this quiet smile itself there came a pious and kindly grace to view; and then, when at times a simple but significant word escaped over his lips, it appeared as a gift deserving thanks. So likewise was it with the little songs, which he now and then chanted. They were almost as soon ended as begun; but in their short lines dwelt a deep graceful life, whether it shaped itself as a friendly sigh, or as a blessed smile. The noble Froda felt as if a younger brother had been riding at his hand, or even a tender blooming son.

In this way they continued several days together: it almost

seemed as if their paths were marked out for them in inseparable union; and much as they rejoiced in this, they used to look at one another, at outsetting, or when cross-ways met, with an air of sadness, as if asking whether there would still appear no diversity in their direction. Nay, it seemed as if in Edwald's downcast eye a tear were gathering.

It happened once, that in their inn, they came upon a rude overbearing Knight; of gigantic form and strong limbs, and foreign un-German speech and manners. He came, it appeared, from Bohemia. This Knight looked over with a strange smile to Froda, who had again spread out the old Book with Aslauga's History before him, and was diligently reading it. "Perhaps you are a clerical Knight?" he inquired of him, and seemed ready furnished to commence a whole train of unseemly jests. But the negative reply came over Froda's lips in so grave and firm a tone, that the foreign Knight on the instant stopped short; as you often see the smaller animals, when they have risked a little liberty with their king the Lion, shrink into peace at a single look from him. Into peace, however, this foreign Knight did not shrink. On the other hand he now began to break jokes on Edwald, on his youth, his silence, and delicate form; all which the latter bore for some time with great patience; but at last when the stranger ventured a too injurious word, he rose up, girt on his sword, and said with a dainty bow: "I thank you, sir, for your wish to give me opportunity of proving that I am no timid or unpractised follower of knighthood. For in this view alone can your behaviour be excused, which otherwise I should be obliged to call extremely uncivil. Would you please——?"

With this he stept out before the door; the Bohemian followed him with a scornful smile; and Froda, much concerned for his young friend, whose honour was, however, far too precious in his eyes to allow a thought of in any way taking up the cause himself.

It soon appeared that the Northman's anxiety had been

groundless. With equal vigour and address, young Edwald fell on his gigantic adversary; so that to look upon the matter, it was almost like those battles between knights and forest monsters, of which we read in old books. The issue, too, was of the same sort. As the Bohemian was collecting all his strength for a decisive stroke, Edwald darted in on him, and with the force of a wrestler cast him to the ground. Then, however, he spared his conquered enemy; courteously helped him up again, and went to seek his horse. In a little, he and Froda left the inn; and their journey once more led them both the same way.

"From henceforth I am glad of this," said Froda, pointing with a look of satisfaction to their common road. "For I must own to thee, Edkin"—he was wont in pleasant confidence to call his young friend by this childlike name—"I must own to thee, when I thought hitherto, that perhaps thou wert journeying with me to the Tournament in honour of the fair Hildegardis, a certain care rose up over my heart. Thy true knightly spirit I well knew; but I dreaded lest the force in thy tender arms might not suffice it. At length I have come to know thee as a swordsman, that may long seek his match; and Heaven be thanked if our paths go on and on, one way; and welcome to me, by the first chance, to front me in the lists!"

But Edwald looked at him with a sad countenance, and said: "What can my strength and skill avail me, when it is with thee I am to try them, and for the highest prize of life, which only one of us can gain? Ah! this heavy news, that thou also art proceeding to the fair Hildegardis' Tournament, I have long foreboded with sorrowful heart."

"Edkin," answered the smiling Froda, "thou kind gentle child, dost thou not see, then, that I already wear the image of a mistress on my breast-plate? My battle is but for the honour of victory, not for thy fair Hildegardis."

"*My* fair Hildegardis!" sighed Edwald. "That she will never be in this world: or if she should—Ah, Froda! it

would break thy heart. I know well, the Northland faith is deep-rooted like your rocks, and hard to melt like their snowy tops; but let no son of man believe that he can look unpunished into the fair eyes of Hildegardis. Has not she, the proud, the overproud maiden, so crazed my still, humble mind, that I have forgotten the chasm which is lying betwixt us, and am hastening after her, and would rather die than renounce the wild hope of gaining this eagle spirit for myself."

"I will help thee, Edkin," answered Froda, still smiling. "Could I but know how this queenly mistress looks! She must resemble the Walkeurs of our Heathen ancestors, I think, since so many gallant heroes yield before her."

Edwald, with a serious air, took a picture from his breast-plate, and held it up to him. Fixed, and as if enchanted, Froda gazed upon it; his cheeks glowed, his eyes sparkled; the smile vanished from his face, as sunlight fades away from the meadows before the advancing blackness of the storm.

"Dost thou see now, my lordly comrade," muttered Edwald, "that for one, or perhaps for both of us, the joy of life is gone?"

"Not yet," answered Froda, with a violent effort over his mind; "but hide thy strange picture, and let us rest beneath this shade. The duel must have tired thee a little; and for me an unwonted weariness presses me down with leaden weight."

They dismounted from their horses: and reclined themselves on the sward.

CHAPTER IV

The noble Froda had no purpose of sleeping; he wished without disturbance to begin a stout struggle with himself, and try, if so might be, to drive from his mind the frightfully fair image of Hildegardis. But it was as if the foreign

power had already grown a portion of his own life; and at last a restless dreamy sleep did in fact overshadow his exhausted senses. He fancied himself fighting among a crowd of knights, and Hildegardis was looking on with smiles from a gay balcony; and as he was about gaining the prize, he perceived Edwald moaning in his blood under the hoofs of the horses. Again it seemed to him that he was standing by the side of Hildegardis in a church, and about to be married to her; he knew well that it was not right; and the Yes, which he was to pronounce, he pressed back with resolute force into his heart; and in doing so his eyes were wetted with warm tears. Out of still wilder and more perplexed visions Edwald's voice at length awoke him. He sat up; and his young comrade was saying in a kind tone, directed towards a neighbouring bush: "Come back, however, noble maid. I will surely help you if I can; I did not mean to scare you away; only you were not to interrupt my brother in his sleep." A departing gleam of gold glittered over through the twigs.

"For Heaven's sake, comrade," cried Froda starting to his feet, "whom art thou speaking to, whom didst thou see near me?"

"I know not rightly how it was, myself," said Edwald. "Thou hadst scarcely fallen asleep, when a figure came forward from the wood, wrapped up in deep dark coverings: at first I took her for a peasant woman. She sat down by thy head, and though I could see nothing of her face I observed that she was in grief, and even saw her weeping. I beckoned to her to remove, and not disturb thee; and was about to offer her a piece of gold, supposing her distress arose from poverty. But suddenly my hand was as it were rendered powerless; and a terror passed through my heart, as if I had conceived such a thought against a queen. At the same time glittering gold locks here and there waved out from among her coverings, and the grove began almost to shine with the reflection of them. 'Poor boy,' said she then,

'thou lovest in thy own breast, and canst figure how a high female soul must burn in keen sadness, when a hero that engaged to be ours, turns away his heart, and is drawn to lower hopes like a weak bondsman.' Thereupon she rose, and disappeared with a sigh in that bush. I almost felt, Froda, as if she named thee."

"Yes, she named me," answered Froda; "and she has not named me in vain. Aslauga! thy knight comes on; he rides into the lists, and for thee and thy renown alone. And in the meanwhile, Edkin, we will win thy proud bride for thee also." With this, full of his old proud joyfulness, he again sprang on horseback; and whenever the magic of Hildegardis' beauty was about to mount up before him, to dazzle and perplex, he gave a smile and cried "Aslauga!" and his inward sun again beamed forth serene and cloudless.

CHAPTER V

On a balcony in the stately Castle of the Mayn, Hildegardis was accustomed to enjoy the cool of the evening, looking over the rich sweet scene; and with still more pleasure over the gleam of arms, which might generally be seen at the same time on many distant roads, from knights journeying hither, with and without retinue, purposing for the high prize of the Tournament to try their force and courage in it. She was in truth a very proud and high-minded maiden; and perhaps carried matters farther in this respect than even her glancing beauty and princely rank could altogether justify. Now, as she was once looking over the glittering roads with her usual smile, a young damsel of her train began this little song:

Ah were I but a little bird,
To sing from tree to tree;
And telling no one e'er a word,
Come out so frank and free
With all, O with all that dwelt in me!

Ah were I but a little flower,
To bloom on grassy lea:
With my sweet perfumes every hour,
Come out so frank and free
With all, O with all that dwelt in me!

Ah I am but an armed Knight
Bound over land and sea;
Must shut my heart in rest and fight;
And laid in grave shall be
My all, O my all that dwells in me!

"Why do you sing this song, and even now?" said Hildegardis, striving to look very proud and scornful at it, yet a deep secret sadness was visibly enough flitting over her face. "It came into my head I know not how," replied the maid, "as I looked up the road, where the soft Edwald with his dainty little songs first came to us; it was he that taught me this. But seems it not, my mistress, and you, good girls, as if Edwald were riding hither that way again this moment?" —"Dreams!" sneered Hildegardis; and yet for a long while could not lead away her eye from the knight, till at last almost by violence she turned it on Froda, his companion, saying: "Well, yes, that one is Edwald. But what have you to see in that meek humble boy? Here cast your eyes, my maidens, on that other lofty form, if you would see a proper man." She was silent. Through her bosom went a sound as of prophesying, that now the conqueror of the Tournament was riding into the court; and for the first time in her life, in looking at the stately Northman, she felt a submissive, almost painful reverence for a human being.

At supper the two new-come Knights were placed opposite the queenly Hildegardis. As Froda, after the fashion of the North, was sitting in full armour, the golden figure of Aslauga glittered from the silver cuirass full in the eyes of the proud lady. She smiled haughtily, as if she felt that it depended but on her will to drive the image of that fair one from the breast and the heart of the Knight. But suddenly a clear

golden gleam passed through the hall, so that Hildegardis cried: "What keen lightning!" and covered her eyes with her hands. Froda, however, looked with joyful salutation at the bright splendour. Thereby Hildegardis' fear of him grew still deeper; though she thought within herself: "This highest and most mysterious of men was before all others born for her alone." Yet she could not help often looking, almost against her will, with emotion and warmth at the poor Edwald, who was sitting there so silent and kindly, as if he were smiling compassionately on his own sorrow and his own vain hope.

When the two Knights were left alone in their apartment, Edwald still kept looking for a long time from the window into the fresh airy night. Then he sang to his cithern:

A Hero so true,
A Boy who loved
This hero proved,
They went through the world, these two.

The Hero did win
Him peace and joy;
This saw the Boy,
And had his delight therein.

But Froda took the cithern from his hands, and said: "No, Edkin, I will teach thee another song. Listen:

The Hall it grows bright as at morning-tide,
The Maiden is come in beauty's pride:
She looks on the right, and then round the left;
No gallant is yet of hope bereft.
He there with the golden cloak will 't be?
She glances aside: I think, not he.
Or he with the cunning talk and wise?
She 's turning from him her ear and eyes.
Belike 'tis the Prince with the pearls and gold?
Her look on that side is short and cold.
Then who, in the world, let us hear, I pray,
Who is 't that the Maid at last will say?

All silent and sorrowing, sits apart
A dainty young Squire; he rules her heart.
They tell many tales to themselves, I wot;
That one, he shall win, and knows it not."

Edwald's heart was glowing within his breast. "As God will," said he, low to himself; "but I think I should never understand how such a thing had come to pass."

"As God will!" repeated Froda. The two friends embraced, and soon after fell cheerfully asleep.

CHAPTER VI

Some days after this, Froda was once sitting in a remote grove of the Castle garden, reading in the ancient Book about his fair mistress Aslauga. Now, it chanced that Hildegardis was passing that way at the time. She stopped thoughtfully, and said:

"How comes it, you strange compound of Knight and cunning Master, that you keep the rich treasures of your knowledge so much to yourself? I should think, you must have many fine stories ready in your mind; for instance, the one you have before you even now: for I see some bright dainty figures of fair virgins and noble heroes painted among the letters."

"In sooth, it is the lordliest and loveliest story this, in the whole world," answered Froda. "But ye have no patience, and no seriousness, to listen to our old Northland tales."

"Who told you that?" said Hildegardis, with a little pride, which she liked to assume towards Froda when she could; then seated herself on the stone bench opposite him, and gave order that "he should forthwith read to her somewhat from the Book."

Froda began; and, in the very exertion with which he laboured to translate the old heroic Iceland speech into

German, his heart and soul flamed up in more solemn fervour. When he raised his eyes now and then, he looked into Hildegardis' beaming countenance, as for joy and sympathy and admiration, it glanced still fairer and fairer; and thoughts went through his mind, as if she, after all, might be his appointed bride on Earth, to whom Aslauga herself was conducting him.

Then suddenly the characters grew strangely perplexed before his eyes; it was as if the figures were beginning to move, and he was forced to stop. But, as he was looking with strained sight into the Book, to drive away this wondrous interruption, he heard a well-known, gently-solemn voice, saying: "Make a little room, fair lady. The story which the Knight is reading to you treats of me, and I like to hear it."

Before the eyes of the gazing Froda sat his mistress Aslauga, in the pomp of her golden waving locks, on the bench beside Hildegardis. The maiden, with tears of fright in her eyes sank back in a swoon. Aslauga threatened her Knight, earnestly but kindly, with her fair right hand, and vanished.

"What have I done to you," cried Hildegardis, recovering from her faint by his exertions, "what have I done to you, wicked Knight, that you call your Northern spectres to my side, and with your horrid magic frighten me to death?"

"Dame," answered Froda, "so help me God, I did not call this mysterious lady, who has just appeared to us. But her will I now know full well; and so I recommend you to God's keeping."

With this, he walked thoughtfully out of the grove.

In affright, Hildegardis fled on the other side, from the sombre gloom of the leaves, and stept forth on a fair open green, where Edwald, in the fine glow of twilight, was plucking flowers; and, with friendly smiles, he offered her a nosegay of narcissuses and sensitive violets.

CHAPTER VII

The day appointed for the Tournament had now arrived; and a great Duke, commissioned as deputy by the Emperor, arranged all things in the lordliest and most splendid fashion for the solemn festival. Large, and level, and beautifully shaped, lay the jousting-ground; strewed with the finest sand, that man and horse might have proper footing on it; and glancing forth almost like a pure field of snow in the middle of the green lea. Rich cloths of silk from Arabia, decorated in curious interlacings with Indian gold, hung many-coloured over the lists enclosing the space, and flowed down from the high scaffoldings erected for ladies and princely spectators. At the upper end, under a canopy of golden arches, tastefully and boldly crossed and combined, was Hildegardis' station. Green garlands and wreaths waved gracefully between the glittering pillars, in the fine July air; and, with impatient eyes, the crowding multitude outside the lists looked up to this, expecting the sight of the fairest maiden in Germany; and only now and then drawn some other way by the stately entrance of men-at-arms, riding gallantly through the barriers. O! how many bright harnesses, and richly-embroidered cloaks of satin, and high-waving plumes, were to be seen there that day! The lordly host, saluting each other and speaking together, swayed this way and that, on the ground within the lists, like a flower-bed stirred by the breath of the air; but a bed where the stalks had grown to trees, and the yellow and white leaves had bloomed into gold and silver, and the dew-drops had hardened into pearls and diamonds. For whatever was beautiful and precious in the world, these noble gentlemen had tastefully and variedly expended on the glory of that day.

Many eyes were turned on Froda, who, without scarf, or

plume, or cloak, with his silver-gleaming cuirass, and Aslauga's golden figure on it, and his well-wrought helmet of golden locks, glittered from amid the crowd like polished brass. Others also there were, that found their enjoyment in looking at young Edwald, who wore a cloak of white satin, fringed with azure and silver, almost covering his whole armour; and a large plume of swan-white feathers, overflowing his whole helmet. To view him, he seemed decorated with almost feminine grace; and yet the rare force with which he managed his wild white steed, announced the victorious strength of this tender hero.

In strange contrast with these two, was a giant shape in armour, dressed in a cloak of black shining bear-skin, trimmed with fine fur, without any ornament of clear metal whatever; even his helmet was overlaid with black bear-skin; and, instead of plumes, a mane of blood-red horse-hair streamed copiously down on all sides from it. Froda and Edwald knew the dark Knight well; it was their uncivil guest in the inn; and he likewise seemed to recognise the two friends; for he whirled his horse abruptly round, pressed through the crowd of fighters, and, after speaking some time at the lists with an ugly, brass-coloured old woman, sprang over the enclosure with a wild leap, and, darting off like an arrow, vanished out of sight. The old woman nodded after him with a friendly gesture; the multitude laughed, as at a strange Carnival show; and Edwald and Froda had their own almost frightsome thoughts on the matter; which, however, they did not see meet to impart to each other.

The kettledrums rolled, the trumpets sounded: leaning on the old Duke's arm, Hildegardis, richly attired, more resplendent still in all the brightness of her own beauty, stept forward, under the arching of the golden bower, and courtesied to the assembly. The Knights bowed their heads to the ground, and perhaps in every one of their hearts this thought might be beating: "There is no man on Earth that can merit so royal a bride." While Froda bowed, it seemed to

him the golden light of Aslauga's tresses glanced over his eye; and his heart was proud and gay, that his mistress held him worthy to be put in mind of her so often.

The Tournament began. At first, the trial was with blunt swords and battle-axes; then man to man, with lances; and, finally, the whole host parted into two equal bodies, and commenced a universal fight, in which it stood with every one to use sword or spear, as he pleased.

Froda and Edwald had alike gained the prize over their rivals; as each, justly estimating his own and his friend's courageous force, had in some degree anticipated: and now the two were to decide, by a match at running with the lance, to whom the highest crown of victory belonged. Before commencing, they rode slowly into the middle of the course together, and settled where they were to take their places.

"Keep thy inspiring star firmly in thy eye," smiled Froda. "I, too, shall not want the like gracious help."

Edwald looked round with astonishment to see the mistress whom his friend seemed to have in view, and the latter continued:

"I did wrong to conceal aught from thee; but after the jousting, thou shalt know all. For the present, heed not unnecessary thoughts, dear Edkin, and sit firm, firm in thy saddle; for I tell thee, I will run with all my force; seeing it is not my own honour only that is at stake, but the far higher honour of my lady."

"In such wise I also purpose to do," said Edwald, kindly. They shook hands, and then rode to their places.

At the pealing of the trumpets, the friends, dashing forward quick as arrows, again met together. Their lances shivered into splinters; the horses staggered; the Knights, unmoved in their stirrups, plucked them up, and rode back to their stations.

When the signal was given for another course, Edwald's white steed snorted, wild and affrighted; Froda's strong chesnut reared into the air. It was clear that the two noble

animals both dreaded a second hard encounter; but the Knights held them firm with bit and spur, and, at a new call of the trumpets, they again thundered forward, fierce and obedient. Edwald had, with a deep glowing look, anew impressed his soul with the beauty of his mistress; at the moment of meeting, he cried aloud: "Hildegardis!" and so hard did his lance strike his valiant adversary, that the latter sank back on the haunches of his horse, with difficulty kept his saddle, and scarcely continued stirrup-fast; while Edwald, without wavering, dashed by; lowered his spear in salutation as he passed Hildegardis' bower; and then, amid the loud huzzaing of the multitude, galloped to his place for the third course. Ah! Hildegardis herself had greeted him with blushes and kind looks, in her surprise; and he felt as if the intoxicating bliss of this victory were already won.

Won, however, it was not; for the noble Froda, glowing with warlike shame, was again taming his frighted horse, and chastising it with sharp strokes of his spurs, for the share it had borne in this mischief. At the same time he said, in a low voice: "Dear fair mistress, show thyself visibly to me; it concerns thy name's honour."

To all other persons, it seemed as if a rosy golden summer cloud were flitting over the deep blue sky; but Froda looked into the heavenly face of his mistress; felt himself, as it were, fanned by her golden tresses; and "Aslauga!" cried he, and the Knights rushed together; and far from his horse flew Edwald, down upon the dusty course.

CHAPTER VIII

Froda, in knightly fashion, first for a space continued in motionless stillness; as if waiting to see whether any one yet thought of contesting him the victory; and, on his mailed horse, he looked almost like a lofty statue of metal. All around, the people stood silent in abashed astonishment; and

as they did break out in the cry of triumph, he beckoned solemnly with his hand, and all were again dumb. Then, with a light bound, he was out of his saddle, and hastened to the place where the fallen Edwald was rising. He pressed him closely to his heart; led his white steed to him, and insisted on holding the stirrup as he mounted. Then he himself again sprang on horseback also, and rode by the side of Edwald to Hildegardis' gold bower; where, with lowered spear and lifted visor, he thus spoke:

"Fairest of all living women, I bring you here Edwald, your knightly bridegroom, before whose lance and sword all the heroes of this Tournament have yielded, I excepted, to whom the lordly jewel of the victory can nowise belong; seeing, as the figure on my cuirass shows, I already serve another mistress."

The Duke was on the point of stepping forward to the two Knights, to conduct them up to the bower; but a sign from Hildegardis restrained him; and she said, with angry, agitated looks:

"Then it seems, my Danish Knight, Sir Froda, you serve your lady ill; for, even now, you have openly called me the fairest of living women."

"This I did," answered Froda, with a courteous bow, "because my fair mistress belongs to the dead."

A slight horror breathed through the multitude at these words, and through Hildegardis' heart; but soon the anger of the virgin again flamed up, and the more, as the lordliest and most wondrous knight whom she knew despised her for the sake of one dead.

"I make known to all," cried she, with solemn earnestness, "that by the just will of my Imperial uncle, this hand can belong to no vanquished man, how noble and renowned soever he may otherwise have appeared. And as the conqueror in this Tournament is bound by service elsewhere, this battle must for me be accounted no battle, and I go hence as I came, a free unaffianced maid."

The Duke seemed desirous of remonstrating; but she turned proudly from him, and left the bower. At this instant, a sharp unexpected gust of air laid hold of the green garlands and wreaths, and threw their ravelled and rustling festoons after her; wherein the people, dissatisfied with her haughtiness, thought they saw a threatening omen; and so, with murmurs of derisive approval, they dispersed.

CHAPTER IX

The two Knights had returned, in deep silence, to their apartments. Arrived there, Edwald had himself disharnessed: he placed all the pieces of his fair bright armour carefully together, with a kind exactness, almost as if he were burying a beloved friend that was dead. Then he beckoned his squires to leave the chamber, took his lute in his arm, and sang this little song to its notes:

"Who's this thou art laying
In grave so still?
My wild, my unstaying,
And froward will.
Sleep soundly, thou will, in thy narrow bed!
My hope sleeps with thee, 'tis cold and dead."

"Thou wilt make me hate thy lute," said Froda: "do now, accustom it to merrier touches. It is far too good for a passing-bell, and thou, in sooth, for such a bellman. I tell thee, my young hero, it will all be right, and as it should be."

Edwald looked in his face with astonishment for a while, then answered kindly: "No, dear Froda, if it offends thee, I will surely not sing again." However, he struck a few tones from the lute, which sounded infinitely tender and loving. Then the Northman, much moved, caught him in his arms, and said: "Dear Edkin, sing, and speak, and do whatever pleases thee; to me it will always be delightful. But thou

mayest believe it well, when I say to thee, with no unaided knowledge, that thy sorrow must end; whether to death or life I yet see not, but great surpassing joy does await thee, for certain." Firm and cheerful Edwald rose from his seat, grasped his companion's arm, and stept out with him, through blooming shrubberies, into the airy coolness of twilight.

At this same hour, an old woman, disguised in much superfluous apparel, was proceeding, under secret guidance, to the fair Hildegardis' chamber. The woman was swarthy, and singular to look upon; by many feats of art, she had collected about her a part of the multitude returning from the Tournament, and, in the end, had scared them all asunder in wild horror. Before this last occurrence, Hildegardis' girdle-maid had hastened to her mistress, to entertain her with the strange, merry, conjuring tricks of the old brass-coloured woman; and the ladies of the suite, striving to banish the chagrin of their disconsolate Princess, bade the messenger call in the crone. Hildegardis assented, hoping thereby to divert the attention of her maidens from herself; and so be permitted, with more deep and earnest attention, to watch the varying forms that were flitting in confusion through her mind.

Hildegardis' maid found the place already empty, and the old brass-coloured stranger standing in the middle of it, laughing immoderately. Being questioned, the woman did not hesitate to tell how she had, in a twinkling, disguised herself in the shape of a huge owl, and in screeching words, informed the spectators that she was the Devil, whereupon every one of them had with loud shrieks run off for home.

The maid felt frightened at the thought of such hateful jesting; yet she durst not go back to ask new orders from her mistress, having already noticed the bad humour she was in. Therefore she satisfied herself with enjoining on the old woman, under many promises and threats, the strictest charges to behave herself with proper discreetness and good-manners in the Castle; and then led her in by the most secret paths,

that none of those she had just frightened might notice her.

The crone now appeared before Hildegardis; and, in the midst of a deep humble courtesy, nodded to her, in a strange confidential wise, as if the two had been concerned in some mutual secret. The Princess involuntarily shrunk together at this movement; yet, hideous as the old woman's face appeared to her, she could not for a moment turn away her eyes from it. To the rest, the expectations they had placed on the old woman seemed by no means repaid: in truth, she played nothing but the most ordinary tricks, and told stories, known to every one; so that even the girdle-maid grew wearied and indifferent, and felt no little shame at having recommended her. She accordingly soon glided out unobserved, and several of the maidens followed her example; and still, as any one of them withdrew, the old crone twisted her mouth into a smile, and repeated that hatefully confidential nod. Hildegardis could not understand what attraction it was that she felt to the jests and stories of this brass-coloured woman; but so it was, in her whole life she had never listened to any one with such attention. The crone went on narrating and narrating, and the night was already looking dark through the windows; but the maidens who were still with Hildegardis had all sunk into deep sleep, and forgotten to light tapers in the chamber.

Then, in the sombre hour of dusk, this swart old woman rose from the stool where she had hitherto been sitting, and just as if she now felt at her ease and at home, stept forward to Hildegardis, who was stupefied with horror; sat down beside her on her purple couch, clasped her with odious caresses in her long withered arms, and whispered some words in her ear. The Princess felt as if some one were pronouncing Froda's and Edwald's name, both at once, and the sound of them seemed to change into a melody of flutes; which, clear and silvery as its warblings were, nevertheless lulled her as into a sleep. she could move her limbs indeed, but only to

follow the music, which wove, as it were, a veil of silver network around the hideous form of the crone. And the latter walked from the chambers, and Hildegardis after her, through her sleeping maidens, singing all the way in a low small voice: "Ye maidens, ye maidens, I wander at night."

Outside the Castle was the giant Bohemian, in his bear-skin cloak, waiting with squire and groom, all ready mounted. He laid a heavy bag of money on the crone's shoulders, so that she sank, half-whimpering, half-laughing, to the ground; then he lifted the dreaming Hildegardis on his horse, and galloped off with her in silence, into the deepening gloom of the night.

CHAPTER X

"Ye bold lords and knights, who yesterday contended in honour for the prize of your arms, the fair Hildegardis' hand! Arise! Arise! Saddle your steeds, and away! The fair Hildegardis is stolen!"

So, next morning, in the clear redness of dawn, were many heralds crying through castle and town; and on every side were knights and noble squires dashing forth in clouds of dust, by all the roads, along which, lately in the fair twilight, Hildegardis had, in silent pride, seen her many suitors advancing.

Two, whom you well knew, proceeded in inseparable companionship on this occasion, as before; but whether they were on the right track or not, they knew as little as the rest; for how, and when, the adored mistress could have vanished from her chambers, was still to the whole Court a frightful inexplicable riddle.

Edwald and Froda had travelled on so long as the sun moved over their heads, unresting as he; and now, when he was sinking in the waves of the river, they thought to gain the race of him, and again spurred their wearied horses; but the noble animals staggered and moaned, and there was nothing for it but to let them feed a little on the grassy

sward. Certain of bringing them again at the first call, the knights freed them of curb and snaffle, and sent them off to graze at freedom, and drink in the blue fresh Mayn; they themselves, in the meanwhile, resting under the boughs of a neighbouring alder-tree.

And, deep in the cool dark shades, rose a gleam as of a mild, but clear-glittering light, and checked Froda's utterance, who was, even now, preparing to acquaint his friend of his plighted service to the fair Aslauga; having hitherto been hindered from it, first by Edwald's sadness, and then by his impatience in travelling. Ah! this soft lovely gold light was well known to Froda. "Let us follow it, Edkin," said he, in a low voice; "and let the horses, in the meanwhile, rest and graze." Edwald, without answering, did as his companion advised. An inward voice, half-sweet, half-fearful, seemed to tell him that here was the path to Hildegardis, and the sole path that led to her. Once only he said, with a tone of surprise: "I never saw the twilight glance so beautifully on the leaves as it is doing now." Froda shook his head and smiled, and they pursued in silence their secret track.

On issuing from the other side of the alder-wood, at the shore of the Mayn, which almost encircled it by a sweeping turn, Edwald saw well that some other brightness than that of twilight was shining on them; for the night already hung in cloudy darkness in the sky, and their guiding beam stopped at the strand of the river. The waves were sufficiently enlightened by it, to expose to view a little woody island in the middle of the stream, and a boat on this side fastened to a stake. But on approaching the spot, the Knights descried new objects: A troop of horsemen, of strange foreign shape, all in deep slumber; and, reclining on cushions in the midst of them, a sleeping female dressed in white.

"Hildegardis!" smiled Edwald to himself, in scarcely audible tones; at the same time he drew his sword, making ready for battle, if so were, the robbers might awaken; and beckoned to Froda to lift the sleeping lady, and bring her to

a place of safety. But at that instant, something in the figure of an owl passed whirring over the black squadron; and, with a sudden rattling clang, they all started up, and flew with hideous howling to arms. A tumultuous unequal battle rose in the darkness, for the friendly gleam had vanished. Froda and Edwald were parted in the press, and could only hear each other's stout war-cry from a far distance. Hildegardis, roused from her enchanted sleep, not knowing whether she was dreaming or awake, fled with bewildered senses, and bitterly weeping, into the deepest shades of the alders.

CHAPTER XI

Froda felt his arm growing weary, and the warm blood running down from two wounds in his shoulder. Therefore he determined so to die, that he might mount up with honour from his bloody grave, to the high mistress whom he served; and throwing his shield backwards, he grasped the handle of his sword with both hands, and rushed with a loud war-shout on the terrified enemy. Immediately he heard some voices crying: "It is the Northland Fury that is coming on him! The battle-madness!" And the host, in affright, darted asunder, and the wearied hero remained in his wounds alone in the darkness.

Then once more Aslauga's gold hair gleamed in the shades of the wood; and Froda, exhausted and leaning on his sword, looked towards it, and said: "I think not that I am yet wounded to death; but when it does come to this, then, O beloved mistress! then, of a surety, thou wilt likewise appear to me in all thy loveliness and splendour?" A low "Yes" came breathing over his cheeks, and the gold light vanished.

But now Hildegardis, almost fainting, staggered forth from the thickets, and said, with a feeble voice: "Within is the frightfully fair Northland spectre, and without is the battle! O good God! whither shall I turn?"

Then Froda went towards her with soothing gestures, was about to say many comforting words to her, and to ask concerning Edwald, when suddenly the sound of armour, and wild shouts, gave notice that the Bohemian robbers were returning to the charge. Froda hastily conducted the maiden to the boat; pushed it off from the shore; and rowed with the last effort of his strength to reach the woody island, which he had before seen in the middle of the river. But the robbers had lit torches; they waved them sparkling this way and that; and by their light discovered the boat, as well as that their dreaded Danish enemy was wounded; and from this, new courage rose in their plundering hearts. Froda, before he reached the island, had heard a Bohemian on the other side coming down with a fresh skiff, then a crowd of the foe getting into it, and beginning to pull after him.

"To the wood, fair virgin!" whispered he, so soon as he had helped Hildegardis ashore. "Hide yourself there, while I try to keep the robbers from landing."

But Hildegardis clung fast to his arm, and whispered in reply: "Did I not see you stained in your blood, and pale? And would you that I die of terror in the solitary clefts of this dark hill? Ah! and if your Northland gold-haired lady-spirit were to come again, and sit down by me—Or think you, I do not see how she shines there through the bushes even now?"

"She shines!" repeated Froda; and new force and hope ran through his veins. He mounted the ascent, following the kind gleam; and though Hildegardis trembled at it, she willingly accompanied her guide; only now and then whispering, in an anxious voice: "Ah, Knight! my high, wondrous Knight! do not leave me alone here! It would be my death!" Soothing her with friendly encouragements, he walked on faster and faster, through the hollows and darkness of the wood: for he already heard the sound of the robbers landing on the shore of the island.

Suddenly he found himself at the mouth of a cave, thickly

covered with bushes; and the gleam vanished. "Here, then!" whispered he, endeavouring to hold the branches asunder, that Hildegardis might enter more easily. She paused for a moment, and said:

"If you were to let go the branches again behind me, and I were to be left alone with spectres in the cave!—Oh Heaven!—But, Froda, no doubt you will follow me, poor, frightened, hunted creature, will you not!"

In this confidence she stepped through the boughs; and Froda, who could have wished to remain as sentry, followed her. With strained ear he hearkened through the stillness of the night; Hildegardis durst scarcely draw her breath. The clanging of an armed footstep approached; nearer and nearer, close by the mouth of the cave; and Froda endeavoured in vain to get loose of the trembling maiden. The branches at the entrance were crashing and breaking; Froda sighed heavily: "So I must fall here, like a lurking fugitive, with women's veils floating round me! O God! it is a sorry end! But can I cast away from me this half-fainting form, and let her sink upon the dark, hard ground? Perhaps down into an abyss? Well, be then what must be! Thou, Aslauga, my mistress, knowest that I die in honour!"

"Froda! Hildegardis!" said a soft, well-known voice, at the entrance of the cavern; and, recognising Edwald, Froda, with glad readiness, carried out the Princess into the starlight: "She is dying in our hands for terror," said he, "in this black chasm. Are the enemy near?"

"Most part of them are lying dead on the shore, or floating in their blood among the waves. Lay aside anxiety, and rest yourselves. Art thou wounded, dear Froda?"

In answer to the questions of his astonished friends, he then briefly related, how, passing in the dark for a Bohemian knight, he had stept into the skiff with the rest; after which, on landing, he had found no difficulty in entirely confounding the robbers; who, seeing themselves attacked from the middle of their own troop, had imagined that they were bewitched.

"At last," thus he ended his narrative, "they set to cutting down each other; and now we have only to wait for morning, to begin our journey home with the Princess. For what of the owl-squadron still flits about, will of itself hide in daylight."

While relating these things, he had been preparing, with great care and daintiness, a bed of twigs and moss for Hildegardis; and the wearied lady having, with some gentle words of thanks, soon fallen asleep, he began to dress his friend's wounds, as well as the darkness would permit.

During this earnest occupation, under the moaning of the high dark trees, with the voice of the river-waves murmuring from a distance, Froda, in a low voice, informed his knightly brother what mistress it was that he served. Edwald listened in deep thought, but at last said:

"Believe me, however, the lofty Princess Aslauga will not be wroth with thee, though thou bind thyself in true love with this earthly fair one. Ah! surely even now thou art shining in the dreams of Hildegardis, thou richly-gifted happy hero! I will not stand in thy way with my foolish wishes: it is clear enough that she can never, never love me. Therefore this very day will I set forth to join the war, which so many bold German knights are waging in the heathen land of Prussia; and the black cross which makes them priestly warriors, I will lay, as the surest remedy, on my beating heart. And do thou, dear Froda, take the fair hand which thou hast won in knightly battle, and lead a life of happiness and satisfaction without example."

"Edwald," said Froda, in a serious tone, "this is the first time I ever heard a word from thy mouth, which an honest follower of knighthood could not turn to action. Do thou towards the fair haughty Hildegardis according to thy pleasure; but Aslauga remains my mistress, and no other will I serve in life or death."

At this rigorous answer the youth felt as it were rebuked, and was silent; and the two, without farther speech, sat

watching throughout the night in their own solemn contemplations.

CHAPTER XII

Next morning, scarcely had the sun, bright and smiling, scattered his first radiance over the flowery plains round Hildegardis' Castle, when the watchman blew a merry air on his silver horn; for, with his falcon eyes, he had already from a far distance recognised the Princess, as she came riding along between her two deliverers. And from castle, and town, and hamlet, gay crowds issued forth, hastening to witness the glad arrival.

Hildegardis turned on Edwald her eyes, shining through tears, and said: "Had it not been for you, young hero, all these kind people might have sought long and vainly before finding me in my distress, and before tracing out the noble Froda, who doubtless must now have been lying dumb and cold, a bloody, mangled corpse, in the dark cleft of the rocks."

Edwald bowed humbly, but persisted in his usual silence; nay, it seemed as if some unwonted sorrow repressed even the friendly smile, which formerly, in sweet gentleness, came over his face so readily, at any word of kindness.

The Duke, Hildegardis' guardian, had, in the great joy of his heart, prepared a sumptuous morning repast, and invited to it all the dames and knights who were still there. Now, as Froda and Edwald were ascending the stair, in shining pomp, close after Hildegardis, the youth said in a half whisper to his friend:

"Thou canst indeed never more love me, thou noble, steadfast hero?" and as Froda looked at him with astonishment, he proceeded: "Thus it is when boys take it into their heads to counsel heroes, however well intended it may be. For now I have sinned heavily against thee, and against thy high mistress Aslauga still more."

"Because thou would'st have plucked away every flower in the garden of thy life, to give me pleasure?" said Froda. "No; thou continuest my gentle brother in knighthood now as before, dear Edkin; perhaps thou art grown still dearer to me."

Then Edwald again smiled in still gladness, like a flower after the morning rain in May.

The eyes of Hildegardis glanced on him, mild and kindly; she often spoke with him also, in benignant words and tones; while, on the other hand, since yesternight, a reverent fear seemed to withdraw her from Froda. But Edwald, too, was much altered. With whatever humble joy he accepted the condescending favour of his mistress, it still seemed as if there stood something between the two, which forbade him every, even the most distant, hope of happiness in love.

Now, it chanced that a noble Count, from the Emperor's Court, was announced; who, being then bound on a weighty mission, wished to pay his reverence to the Princess in passing. She received him joyfully; and, directly after the first salutations, looking at her and Edwald, he said: "I know not if my good fortune has guided me to a most pleasant festival? It would be glad news for the Emperor my master."

Hildegardis and Edwald looked very lovely in their embarrassed blushing; and the Count, observing that he had been too hasty, bowed humbly to the young knight, and said: "Pardon me, noble Duke Edwald, my forward way; but I know the wish of my Sovereign, and the hope that this might be already fulfilled made my tongue forget itself."

The eyes of all present fixed inquiringly upon the young hero, who, with graceful embarrassment, thus spoke: "It is true, the Emperor, during my last attendance in his Imperial camp, had the excessive graciousness to make me a Duke. My good fortune so ordered it, that in one of our actions, some horsemen of the enemy, who had dared to attack the sacred person of our Sovereign, fled away just as I arrived at the spot."

The Count, at Hildegardis' request, circumstantially related

this heroic achievement; and it came to light, that Edwald had not only saved the Emperor from the most imminent danger; but likewise, shortly afterwards arranged, and, in the cool daring spirit of a general, victoriously fought, the main battle which decided the war.

Astonishment at first held every one mute; and before the congratulations could begin, Hildegardis turned to Edwald, and said, in a low voice, which, however, in the silence, was heard by all: "The noble Count has expressed the wish of my Imperial uncle; and I now conceal it no longer, my heart's wish is the same. I am Duke Edwald's bride."

With this, she held out to him her fair right hand; and all present waited only for his taking it, to break forth in loud approval. But Edwald did not do as they expected; on the contrary, he sank on his knee before the Princess, saying: "God forbid that the lofty Hildegardis should ever recall a word which she has solemnly spoken before dames and knights. To no vanquished man, you said, could the hand of the Emperor's niece belong; and there stands the noble Danish knight Froda, my conqueror."

Hildegardis turned hastily away with a slight blush, and hid her eyes; and while Edwald rose, it seemed as if a tear ran over his cheek.

Clanging in his armour, Froda stept into the middle of the hall, and exclaimed: "I declare my late victory over Duke Edwald to be pure accident, and again challenge the knightly hero into the lists tomorrow." And so saying, he threw down his iron gauntlet, and it rung on the floor.

But Edwald did not rise to lift it. On the contrary, a deep blush of anger glowed on his cheeks, his eyes glanced indignantly, so that you would scarcely have recognised him for the same person; and after a pause, he said: "Noble knight, Sir Froda, if I erred towards you, we are now even. How could you, a hero gloriously wounded of two sword-cuts, challenge a healthy man tomorrow into the lists, if you did not despise him?"

"Pardon me, Duke," answered Froda, somewhat put to shame, but in all cheerfulness; "I spoke too fast. Not till my complete cure do I challenge you."

Then Edwald joyfully lifted the gauntlet; again knelt down before Hildegardis, who, turning away her face, held him out her fair right hand to kiss; and then, arm in arm with his high Danish friend, he walked out of the hall.

CHAPTER XIII

While Froda's cure was proceeding, Edwald, impatient till it were completed, went out now and then, while the evening was darkening down deep and silent over him, and walked on the flowery terrace under Hildegardis' window, singing graceful little dainty songs, which the maidens of the Princess learned from him, and often repeated.

About this time it happened, that one night when the two friends were together, a man who occupied the post of Writer to the old Duke, Hildegardis' guardian, and who reckoned himself a very knowing person, paid them a visit; for the purpose, as he said, of making them an humble proposal.

The short account of the business was this: That as it was impossible for Froda to do any good with victory, he should take his opportunity, in the approaching Tournament, and quietly fall from his horse; in which wise, he might with certainty secure to his companion the hand of the bride, and at the same time gratify the Imperial will, a thing that could not but turn to good profit for himself in many senses.

At this the two friends in the first place laughed very heartily together; then Froda stept up to the Writer, and said, with great seriousness: "Thee, little mannikin, the old Duke, if he knew thy foolish talk, would, in all likelihood, pack out of his service, not once to mention the Imperial will. But there is a proverb you must get by heart:

When knight with knight hath rode to the lists,
The time is gone for talking of jests;
When knight on knight in the course must dash,
No king or kaiser can stay the clash;
And who pokes his nose in their knightly fray,
He has wish'd his nose from that hour good-day.

"And so your servant, worthy sir! And assure yourself that Edwald and I will run at one another in truth of heart, with all the force that is in us."

The Writer vanished from the chamber in no small haste; and it is said that even next morning he looked exceedingly pale.

CHAPTER XIV

Soon after this, Froda had recovered; the course was again made ready as before, only that it was encircled by even a greater multitude of people; and, in the freshness of the clear dewy morning, the two heroes rode out solemnly together to the battle.

"Good Edwald," said Froda, in a low voice by the way, "prepare thyself beforehand; for this time, too, the victory will not be thine. On that red shining cloud stands Aslauga."

"May be," replied Edwald, with a still smile; "but, under the wreaths of her gold bower, Hildegardis is already beaming, and to-day is even there before us."

The knights took their places; the trumpets called, the course began; and truly Froda's prediction seemed about to be fulfilled; for as they rushed together, Edwald tottered in his seat, so that he let go the bridle, caught the mane with both hands, and not without great labour recovered his position; whilst his wild white horse scoured over the ground with ungovernable springs. Hildegardis also seemed to waver at this sight, but the youth at last tamed his steed, and the second course began.

Froda shot along the ground like a thunderbolt; all thought that the Duke's victory was utterly hopeless. But just at the instant of meeting, the bold Danish horse reared on end as if frightened; the rider swayed, his spear went by without hitting, and under Edwald's firm charge, both steed and knight rushed clanging to the ground, and lay there as if stupefied.

Edwald now did as Froda had done a short time before. In knightly wise, he continued for a space motionless on the spot, as if waiting whether any other adversary would dispute the victory with him: then he sprang from his horse, and flew to the help of his prostrated friend.

Eagerly he laboured to draw him from beneath his horse; and, ere long, Froda regained his senses, extricated himself, and also plucked up his steed. Then he raised his visor, and smiled on his conqueror with a face of warm friendliness, though it was somewhat pale. The latter bowed humbly, almost bashfully, and said: "Thou, my hero, thrown! And by me! I understand it not."

"She herself wished it," answered Froda, smiling. "But come now to thy lofty bride."

In loud triumph shouted the people, low bowed the knights and ladies, as the old Duke now advanced with the lovely pair, and at his bidding, under the wreaths of the gold bower, they fell into each other's arms with soft blushing.

That same day they were solemnly wedded in the chapel of the Castle, seeing Froda had so wished it. A far journey, he said, into another country, was at hand for him; and he could wish so much to be present at the nuptials of his friend before departing.

CHAPTER XV

The tapers were flaming clear in the arched halls of the Castle; Hildegardis had just quitted the arm of her lord,

to lead off a dance with the old Duke, when Edwald beckoned to his brother-in-arms, and both walked out into the moonshiny garden.

"Ah! Froda, my high, lordly hero," said Edwald, after some pause; "wert thou but as happy as I! But thy look, earnest and thoughtful, fixes on the ground; or glows impatient skyward. It were unspeakable if thou hadst really borne a secret longing in thy heart for Hildegardis; and I, foolish boy, had now, favoured in so incomprehensible a manner, stept in thy way."

"Be at ease, good Edkin," smiled the Danish hero. "On the word of a knight, my thinking and longing is for another than thy fair Hildegardis. Aslauga's glancing gold figure beams in my heart more bright than ever. But hear what I have to tell thee.

"At the instant when we met in the course—O, had I words to express it!—I was overflowed, overshone, dazzled, blinded by Aslauga's gold locks, which came waving round me; and my noble horse must have seen them too; for I felt how he reared and started under me. Thee I no longer saw, the world no longer; nothing but Aslauga's angel face close by me, smiling, blooming like a flower in the sea of sunshine which floated round it. My senses failed me; I knew not where I was till thou wert lifting me from beneath the horse; and then, too, in great joy, I saw that it was her own kind will which had struck me to the ground. But a strange exhaustion lay over me, far more than the mere fall could have caused; and I, at the same time, felt as if my mistress must, of a surety, soon send me forth on a far mission. I hastened to my chamber to rest, and immediately a deep sleep fell on me. Then came Aslauga to my dreams, more royally adorned than ever; she entered, sat down by the head of my couch, and said: 'Haste, array thee in all the pomp of thy silver armour, for thou art not a marriage guest only, thou art also the——' And before the word was spoken, she had melted away like a dream; and I felt

great haste to fulfil her command, and was rejoiced in heart. But now, even in the middle of the festival, I seem to myself so solitary as I never was before, and cannot cease thinking what the unfinished speech of my mistress could have meant."

"Thou art of far higher soul, Froda, than I," said Edwald, after a short silence; "and I cannot soar after thee in thy joys. Tell me, however, has a deep sadness never seized thee, that thou shouldst serve so distant a mistress; alas! a mistress who is almost ever hidden from thee?"

"No, Edwald; not so," answered Froda, with eyes gleaming rapture. "I know still that she despises not my service; nay, there are times when she deigns to show herself before me. O! I am a happy, too happy knight and singer."

"And yet thy silence today, thy troubled musing?"

"Not troubled, dear Edkin; but so inward, so deep from the heart, and so strangely unaccountable, withal. But this, too, like everything I feel or encounter, comes all from the words and commands of Aslauga. How can it fail, then, to be something beautiful, and to lead to some high mark?"

A squire, who had hastened after them, gave notice that the ducal bridegroom was staid for in the torch-dance; and Edwald, in returning, desired his friend to take his place in the stately ceremony next to him and Hildegardis. Froda assented, with a friendly nod.

CHAPTER XVI

The horns and hautboys were already raising their stately tones: Edwald hastened to offer his hand to his fair bride; and whilst he walked with her to the middle of the gay floor, Froda was requesting of the noble dame nearest him, not heeding farther who she was, to rise with him for the torch-dance; and, on her consent, the two took their place next the married pair.

But what were his feelings when a light began to gleam

from his partner, before which the torch in his left hand lost its brightness! Scarcely did he dare, in sweet awe-struck hope, to turn his eyes on the dame; and when at last he did so, his boldest wishes and longings were fulfilled. Adorned in a shining bridal-crown of precious stones, Aslauga, in solemn loveliness, was dancing beside him, and beaming on him from amid the sunny splendour of her gold hair, with enrapturing looks.

The amazed spectators could not turn an eye from the mysterious pair: the hero in his silver mail, with the uplifted torch in his hand, pacing on, earnest and joyful, with measured tread; his mistress beside him, rather floating than stepping, and from her golden locks raying forth such brightness, that you might have thought the day was peering in through the night; and where a look could penetrate through all this beamy glory to her face, entrancing heart and sense with the unutterably blissful smile of her eyes and mouth.

Towards the end of the dance, she bent towards Froda, and whispered with a kind, trustful air; and with the last tones of the horns and hautboys, she had disappeared.

No one of the curious onlookers had the courage to question the Northman about his partner; Hildegardis did not seem to have observed her. But shortly before the end of the festival, Edwald approached his friend, and asked in a whisper: "Was it—?"—"Yes, dear youth," answered Froda, "thy marriage-dance has been glorified by the presence of the purest beauty that was ever seen in any land. Ah! and if I understood her whisper rightly, thou shalt not any more behold me sighing and languishing on this clayey Earth. But I dare scarcely hope it. Now, good night, dear Edkin, good night. So soon as I may, I will tell thee all."

CHAPTER XVII

Light, gay morning dreams were still flitting round Edwald's head; when all at once he thought a clear splendour

shone over him. He remembered Aslauga; but it was Froda, whose gold helm of locks was now beaming with a no less sunny brightness than Aslauga's flowing hair. "Ha," thought Edwald in his dream, "how has my beloved brother grown so fair!" And Froda said to him: "I will sing thee somewhat, Edkin; low, quite low, that Hildegardis may not awaken. Listen to me:

"She came in her brightness, fair as day,
To where in his sleep her true Knight lay:
She held in her small and light-white hand,
A plaything, a glancing moon-gold band;
She wound it about his hair and her own,
Still singing the while: We two are one!
All round them the world lay poor and dim,
She mounts in her sheen aloft with him:
He stood in a garden sweet and bright,
The Angels do name it: Land of Light."

"So finely thou hast never in thy life sung before," said the dreaming youth.

"That I well believe, Edkin," said Froda, smiling, and vanished.

But Edwald continued dreaming, dreaming; and many other visions passed before him, all of a lovely cast, though he could not recollect them, when far in the morning he opened his smiling eyes. Froda and his mysterious song alone stood clear before his memory. He now saw well that his friend was dead; but he sorrowed not because of it in his mind, feeling, as he did, that the pure heart of the hero and singer could nowhere find its proper joy, save in the Land of Light, in blissful communion with the high spirits of the ancient time. He glided softly from his sleeping Hildegardis, into the chamber of the departed. He was lying on his bed of rest, almost as beautiful as he had looked in the vision; and the gold helmet on his head was entwisted in a wondrous, beaming lock of hair. Then Edwald made a fair shady grave on consecrated ground; summoned the Castle Chaplain, and with his help interred in it his heroic Froda.

As he returned, Hildegardis awoke. Astonished at his look of solemn, humble cheerfulness, she inquired where he had been, and with a smile he answered: "I have been burying the body of my beloved Froda, who has last night passed away to his gold-haired mistress." Thereupon he told Hildegardis the whole history of Aslauga's Knight; and continued in undisturbed mild joy, though for some time after this, a little stiller than formerly.

He was often to be found sitting at his friend's grave, singing this little song to his cithern:

Aslauga's Knight,
Fair is the dance
Where Angels glance,
And stars do sound the measure!
On earthly fight,
Through change and chance,
To guide us right,
Send down thy light,
Thy heart's undying treasure

LUDWIG TIECK

LUDWIG TIECK

Ludwig Tieck, born at Berlin on the 31st of May 1773, is known to the world only as a Man of Letters, having never held any public station, or followed any profession, except that of authorship. Of his private history the critics and news-hunters of his own country complain that they have little information; a deficiency which may arise in part from the circumstance, that till of late years, though from the first admired by the Patricians of his native literature, he has stood in no high favour, and of course awakened no great curiosity, among the reading *Plebs*; and may indicate, at the same time, that in his walk and conversation there is little wonderful to be discovered.

His literary life he began at Berlin, in his twenty-second year, by the publication of three Novels, following each other in quick succession: *Abdallah*, *William Lovell*, and *Peter Leberrecht*. These works found small patronage at their first appearance, and are still regarded as immature products of his genius; the opening of a cloudy as well as fervid dawn; betokening a day of strong heat, and perhaps at last of serene brightness. A gloomy tragic spirit is said to reign throughout all of them; the image of a high passionate mind, scorning the base and the false, rather than accomplishing the good and the true; in rapt earnestness 'interrogating Fate,' and receiving no answer, but the echo of its own questions reverberated from the dead walls of its vast and lone imprisonment.

In this stage of spiritual progress, where so many not otherwise ungifted minds at length painfully content them-

selves to take up their permanent abode, where our own noble and hapless Byron perished from among us at the instant when his deliverance seemed at hand, it was not Tieck's ill fortune to continue too long. His *Popular Tales*, published in 1797 as an appendage to his last Novel, under the title of *Peter Leberrechts Volksmährchen*, already indicate that he had worked his way through these baleful shades into a calmer and sunnier elevation; from which, and happily without looking at the world through a painted glass of any sort, he had begun to see that there were things to be believed, as well as things to be denied; things to be loved and forwarded, as well as things to be hated and trodden under foot. The active and positive of Goodness was displacing the barren and tormenting negative; and worthy feelings were now to be translated into their only proper language, worthy actions. In Tieck's mind, all Goodness, all that was noble or excellent in Nature, seems to have combined itself under the image of Poetic Beauty; to the service and defence of which he has ever since unweariedly devoted his gifts and his days.

These *Volksmährchen* are of the most varied nature: sombre, pathetic, fantastic, satirical; but all pervaded by a warm genial soul, which accommodates itself with equal aptitude to the gravest or the gayest form. A soft abundance, a simple and kindly but often solemn majesty is in them: wondrous shapes, full of meaning, move over the scene, true modern denizens of the old Fairyland; low tones of plaintiveness or awe flit round us; or a starry splendour twinkles down from the immeasurable depths of Night.

It is by this work, as revised and perfected long afterwards, that we now purpose introducing Tieck to the notice of the English reader: it was by this also that he was introduced to the notice of his countrymen. *Peter Leberrechts Volksmährchen* was reviewed by August Wilhelm Schlegel in the Jena *Litteraturzeitung*; and its author, for the first time, brought under the eye of the world as a man of rich endowments, and in the fair way for turning them to proper

account. To the body of the world, however, this piece of news was surprising rather than delightful; for Tieck's merits were not of a kind to split the ears of the groundlings, and his manner of producing them was ill calculated to conciliate a kind hearing. Schiller and Goethe were at this time silent, or occupied with History and Philosophy: Tieck belonged not to the existing poetic guild; and, far from soliciting admission, he had not scrupled, in the most pleasant fashion, to inform the craftsmen that their great Diana was a dumb idol, and their silver shrines an unprofitable thing. Among these *Volksmährchen*, one of the most prominent, is *Der gestiefelte Kater*, a dramatised version of *Puss in Boots*; under the grotesque masque of which, he had laughed with his whole heart, in a true Aristophanic vein, at the actual aspect of literature; and without mingling his satire with personalities, or any other false ingredient, had rained it like a quiet shower of volcanic ashes on the cant of Illumination, the cant of Sensibility, the cant of Criticism, and the many other cants of that shallow time, till the gumflower products of the poetic garden hung draggled and black under their unkindly coating. In another country, at another day, the drama of *Puss in Boots* may justly be supposed to appear with enfeebled influences; yet even to a stranger there is not wanting a feast of broad joyous humour in this strange phantasmagoria, where pit and stage, and man and animal, and earth and air, are jumbled in confusion worse confounded, and the copious, kind, ruddy light of true mirth overshines and warms the whole.

This What-d'ye-call-it of *Puss in Boots* was, as it were, the keynote which for several years determined the tone of Tieck's literary enterprises. The same spirit lives in his *Verkehrte Welt* (World turned Topsy-turvy), a drama of similar structure, which accompanied the former; in his tale of *Zerbino, or the Tour in search of Taste*, which soon followed it; and in numerous parodies and lighter pieces which he gave to the world in his *Poetic Journal*; the second and last volume of

which periodical contains his *Letters on Shakspeare*, inculcating the same doctrines, in a graver shape. About this time, after a short residence in Hamburg, where he had married, he removed his abode to Jena; a change which confirmed him in his literary tendencies, and facilitated the attainment of their objects. It was here that he became acquainted with the two Schlegels; and, at the same time, with their friend Novalis, a young man of a pure, warm and benignant genius, whose fine spirit died in its first blossoming, and whose posthumous works it was, ere long, the melancholy task of Tieck and the younger Schlegel to publish under their superintendence. With Wackenroder of Berlin, a person of kindred mind with Novalis, and kindred fortune also, having died very early, Tieck was already acquainted and united; for he had coöperated in the *Herzensergiessungen eines einsamen Klosterbruders*, an elegant and impressive work on pictorial art, and Wackenroder's chief performance.

These young men sympathised completely in their critical ideas with Tieck; and each was labouring in his own sphere to disseminate them, and reduce them to practice. Their endeavours, it would seem, have prospered; for in colloquial literary history, this gifted cinquefoil, often it is only the trefoil of Tieck and the two Schlegels, have the credit, which was long the blame, of founding a New School of Poetry, by which the Old School, first fired upon in the *Gestiefelte Kater*, and ever afterwards assailed, without intermission, by eloquence and ridicule, argument and entreaty, was at length displaced and hunted out of being; or, like Partridge the Astrologer, reduced to a life which could be proved to be no life.

Of this New School, which has been the subject of much unwise talk, and of much not very wise writing, we cannot here attempt to offer any suitable description, far less any just estimate. One thing may be remarked, that the epithet *School* seems to describe the case with little propriety. That since the beginning of the present century, a great change

has taken place in German literature, is plain enough, without commentators; but that it was effected by three young men, living in the little town of Jena, is not by any means so plain. The critical principles of Tieck and the Schlegels had already been set forth, in the form both of precept and prohibition, and with all the aids of philosophic depth and epigrammatic emphasis, by the united minds of Goethe and Schiller, in the *Horen* and *Xenien*. The development and practical application of the doctrine is all that pertains to these reputed founders of the sect. But neither can the change be said to have originated with Schiller and Goethe; for it is a change originating not in individuals, but in universal circumstances, and belongs not to Germany, but to Europe. Among ourselves, for instance, within the last thirty years, who has not lifted up his voice with double vigour in praise of Shakspeare and Nature, and vituperation of French taste and French philosophy? who has not heard of the glories of old English literature; the wealth of Queen Elizabeth's age; the penury of Queen Anne's; and the inquiry whether Pope was a poet? A similar temper is breaking out in France itself, hermetically sealed as that country seemed to be against all foreign influences; and doubts are beginning to be entertained, and even expressed, about Corneille and the Three Unities. It seems to be substantially the same thing which has occurred in Germany, and been attributed to Tieck and his associates: only that the revolution, which is here proceeding, and in France commencing, appears in Germany to be completed. Its results have there been embodied in elaborate laws, and profound systems have been promulgated and accepted: whereas with us, in past years, there has been as it were a Literary Anarchy; for the Pandects of Blair and Bossu are obsolete or abrogated, but no new code supplies their place; and, author and critic, each sings or says that which is right in his own eyes. For the principles of German Poetics, we can only refer the reader to the treatises of Kant, Schiller, Richter, the Schlegels, and their many copyists and

expositors; with the promise that his labour will be hard, but not unrewarded by a plenteous harvest of results, which, whether they be doubted, denied or believed, he will find no trivial or unprofitable subject for his contemplation.

These doctrines of taste, which Tieck embraced every opportunity of enforcing as a critic, he did not fail diligently to exemplify in practice; as a long and rapid series of poetical performances lies before the world to attest. Of these, his *Genoveva*, a Play grounded on the legend of that Saint, appears to be regarded as his masterpiece by the best judges; though *Franz Sternebalds Wanderungen*, the fictitious History of a Student of Painting, was more relished by others; and, as a critic tells us, 'here and there a low voice might be even heard voting that this novel equalled *Wilhelm Meister*; the peaceful clearness of which it however nowise attained, but only, with visible effort, strove to imitate.' In this last work he was assisted by Wackenroder. At an earlier period, he had come forth as a translator, with a new version of *Don Quixote*: he now appeared also as a commentator, with a work entitled *Minnelieder aus dem Schwabischen Zeitalter* (Minstrelsy of the Swabian Era), published at Berlin in 1803; with an able Preface, explaining the relation of these poets to Petrarca and the Troubadours. In 1804, he sent out his *Kaiser Octavianus*, a Story which, like the other works mentioned in this paragraph, I have never seen, but which I find praised by his countrymen in no very intelligible terms, as 'a fair revival of the old *Mährchen* (Traditionary Tale); in which, however, the poet moves freely, and has completed the cycle of the romance.' *Die Gemälde* (The Pictures), another of his fictions, has lately been translated into English.

Tieck's frequent change of place bespeaks less settledness in his domestic than happily existed in his intellectual circumstances. From Jena he seems to have again removed to Berlin; then to a country residence near Frankfort-on-Oder; which, in its turn, he quitted for a journey into Italy. In this classic country he found new facilities for two of his

favourite pursuits: he employed himself, it is said, to good purpose, in the study of ancient and modern Art; to which, while in Rome, he added the examining of many old German manuscripts preserved in the Vatican Library. From his labours in this latter department, and elsewhere, his countrymen have not long ago obtained, in addition to the *Minstrelsy*, an *Altdeutsches Theater* (Old-German Theatre), in two volumes, with the hope of more. A collection of Old-German Poetry is still expected.

In 1806, he returned to Germany; first to Munich, then to his former retreat near Frankfort; but, for the next seven years, he was little heard of as an active member of the literary world; and the regret of his admirers was increased by intelligence that ill health was the cause of his inactivity. That this inactivity was more apparent than real, he has proved by his reappearance in new vigour, at a time when he finds a readier welcome and more willing audience. He has since published abundantly in various forms; as a translator, an editor, and a writer both of poetry and prose. In 1812, appeared his early *Volksmährchen*, retouched and improved, and combined into a whole, by conversations, critical, disquisitionary and descriptive, in two volumes, entitled *Phantasus*; from which our present specimens of him are taken. His *Altdeutsches Theater* was followed by an *Altenglisches*, including the disputed plays of Shakspeare; a work gladly received by his countrymen, no less devoted admirers of Shakspeare than ourselves. Since that time, he has paid us a personal visit. In 1818, he was in London, and is said to have been well satisfied with his reception; which we cannot but hope was as respectful and kind as a guest so accomplished, and so friendly to England, deserved at our hands. The fruit of his residence among us, it seems, has already appeared in his writings. He has very lately given to the world a Novel on Shakspeare and his Times; in which he has not trembled to introduce, as acting characters, the great dramatist himself, with Marlowe, and various other poets of

that age. Such is the report; which adds, that his work is admired in Germany; but that any copy of it has crossed the Channel, I have not heard. Of Tieck's present residence, or special pursuits, or economical circumstances, I am sorry to confess my entire ignorance. One little fact may perhaps be worth adding; that Sophie Bernhardi, an esteemed authoress, is his sister.

A very slight power of observation will suffice to convince us that Tieck is no ordinary man; but a true Poet, a Poet *born* as well as *made*. Of a nature at once susceptible and strong, he has looked over the circle of human interests with a far-sighted and piercing eye, and partaken deeply of its joy and woe; and these impressions on his heart or his mind have been like seed sown on fertile ground, ripening under the skyey influences into rich and varied luxuriance. He is no mere observer and compiler; rendering back to us, with additions or subtractions, the Beauty which existing things have of themselves presented to him; but a true Maker, to whom the actual and external is but the *excitement* for ideal creations, representing and ennobling its effects. His feeling or knowledge, his love or scorn, his gay humour or solemn earnestness, all the riches of his inward world, are pervaded and mastered by the living energy of the soul which possesses them; and their finer essence is wafted to us in his poetry, like Arabian odours on the wings of the wind.

But this may be said of all true poets; and each is distinguished from all by his individual characteristics. Among Tieck's, one of the most remarkable is his combination of so many gifts in such full and simple harmony. His ridicule does not obstruct his adoration; his gay Southern fancy lives in union with a Northern heart. With the moods of a longing and impassioned spirit he seems deeply conversant; and a still imagination, in the highest sense of that word, reigns over all his poetic world. Perhaps, on the whole, this is his distinguishing faculty; an imagination, not of the

intellect, but of the character, not so much vague and gigantic as altogether void and boundless. A feeling as of desert vastness steals over us in what appeared to be a common scene; or in high passages, a fire as of a furnace glows in one small spot, under the infinitude of darkness: Immensity and Eternity seem to rest over the bounded and quickly-fading.

His mind we should call well cultivated; for no part of it seems stunted in its growth, and it acts in soft unimpeded union. His heart seems chastened in the school of experience; fervid, yet meek and humble, heedful of good in mean forms, and looking for its satisfaction not in passive, but in active enjoyments. His poetical taste seems no less polished and pure: with all his mental riches and excursiveness, he merits in the highest degree the praise of chaste simplicity, both in conception and style. No man ever rejected more carefully the aid of exaggeration in word or thought, or produced more result by humbler means. Who could have supposed that a tragedy, no mock-heroic, but a real tragedy, calculated to affect and excite us, could have been erected on the groundwork of a nursery tale? Yet let any one read *Blaubart* in the *Phantasus*, and say whether this is not accomplished. Nor is Tieck's history of our old friend *Bluebeard* any Fairy-land *George Barnwell*; but a genuine play, with comic as well as tragic life in it; 'a group of earnest figures, painted on a laughing ground,' and surprising us with poetical delight, where we looked for anything sooner.

In his literary life, Tieck has essayed many provinces, both of the imaginative and the intellectual world; but his own peculiar province seems to be that of the *Mährchen*; a word which, for want of a proper synonym, we are forced to translate by the imperfect periphrase of Popular Traditionary Tale. Here, by the consent of all his critics, including even the collectors of real *Mährchen*, he reigns without any rival. The true tone of that ancient time, when man was in his childhood, when the universe within was divided by no wall

of adamant from the universe without, and the forms of the Spirit mingled and dwelt in trustful sisterhood with the forms of the Sense, was not easy to seize and adapt with any fitness of application to the feelings of modern minds. It was to penetrate into the inmost shrines of Imagination, where human passion and action are reflected in dim and fitful but deeply significant resemblances, and to copy these with the guileless humble graces which alone can become them. Such tales ought to be poetical, because they spring from the very fountains of natural feeling; they ought to be moral, not as exemplifying some current apophthegm, but as imaging forth in shadowy emblems the universal tendencies and destinies of man. That Tieck has succeeded thus far in his Tales is not asserted by his warmest admirers; but only that he now and then approaches such success, and throughout approaches it more closely than any of his rivals.

How far this judgment of Tieck's admirers is correct, our readers are now to try for themselves. Respecting the reception of these Tales, I cannot boast of having any very certain, still less any very flattering presentiment. Their merits, such as they have, are not of a kind to force themselves on the reader; and to search for merits few readers are inclined. The ordinary lovers of witch and fairy matter will remark a deficiency of spectres and enchantments here, and complain that the whole is rather dull. Cultivated freethinkers again, well knowing that no ghosts or elves exist in this country, will smile at the crackbrained dreamer, with his spelling-book prose and doggrel verse, and dismiss him good-naturedly as a German Lake-poet. Alas, alas! Ludwig Tieck could also fantasy, 'like a drunk Irishman,' with great conveniency, if it seemed good to him; he can laugh too, and disbelieve, and set springes to catch woodcocks in manifold wise: but his present business was not this: nor, I fear, is the lover of witch matter, or the cultivated freethinker, likely soon to discover what it was.

Other readers there are, however, who will come to him in a truer and meeker spirit, and, if I mistake not, be rewarded with some touches of genuine poetry. For the credit of the stranger, I ought to remind them that he appears under many disadvantages. In the process of translation he has necessarily lost, and perhaps in more than the usual proportion; the childlike character of his style was apt to diverge into the childish; the nakedness of his rhymes, perhaps at first only wavering between simplicity and silliness, must in my hands too frequently have shifted nearer the latter. Above all, such works as his come on us unprepared; unprovided with any model [1] by which to estimate them, or any category under which to arrange them. Nevertheless, the present specimens of Tieck do exhibit some features of his mind; a few, but those, as it seems to me, its rarest and highest features: to such readers, and with such allowances, the *Runenberg*, the *Trusty Eckart* and their associates may be commended with some confidence.

[1] I have not forgotten Allan Cunningham's *Traditional Tales of the English and Scottish Peasantry;* a work full of kind fancy and soft glowing exuberance, and with traces of a genius which might rise into a far loftier and purer element than it has ever yet moved and lived in.

Andrew Jackson

THE FAIR-HAIRED ECKBERT

In a district of the Harz dwelt a Knight, whose common designation in that quarter was the Fair-haired Eckbert. He was about forty years of age, scarcely of middle stature, and short light-coloured locks lay close and sleek round his pale and sunken countenance. He led a retired life, had never interfered in the feuds of his neighbours; indeed, beyond the outer wall of his castle he was seldom to be seen. His wife loved solitude as much as he; both seemed heartily attached to one another; only now and then they would lament that Heaven had not blessed their marriage with children.

Few came to visit Eckbert; and when guests did happen to be with him, their presence made but little alteration in his customary way of life. Temperance abode in his household, and Frugality herself appeared to be the mistress of the entertainment. On these occasions Eckbert was always cheerful and lively; but when he was alone, you might observe in him a certain mild reserve, a still, retiring melancholy.

His most frequent guest was Philip Walther; a man to whom he had attached himself, from having found in him a way of thinking like his own. Walther's residence was in Franconia; but he would often stay for half a year in Eckbert's neighbourhood, gathering plants and minerals, and then sorting and arranging them. He lived on a small independency, and was connected with no one. Eckbert frequently

attended him in his sequestered walks; year after year a closer friendship grew betwixt them.

There are hours in which a man feels grieved that he should have a secret from his friend, which, till then, he may have kept with niggard anxiety; some irresistible desire lays hold of our heart to open itself wholly, to disclose its inmost recesses to our friend, that so he may become our friend still more. It is in such moments that tender souls unveil themselves, and stand face to face; and at times it will happen, that the one recoils affrighted from the countenance of the other.

It was late in Autumn, when Eckbert, one cloudy evening, was sitting, with his friend and his wife Bertha, by the parlour fire. The flame cast a red glimmer through the room, and sported on the ceiling; the night looked sullenly in through the windows, and the trees without rustled in wet coldness. Walther complained of the long road he had to travel; and Eckbert proposed to him to stay where he was, to while away half of the night in friendly talk, and then to take a bed in the house till morning. Walther agreed, and the whole was speedily arranged: by and by wine and supper were brought in; fresh wood was laid upon the fire; the talk grew livelier and more confidential.

The cloth being removed, and the servants gone, Eckbert took his friend's hand, and said to him: "Now you must let my wife tell you the history of her youth; it is curious enough, and you should know it." "With all my heart," said Walther; and the party again drew round the hearth.

It was now midnight; the moon looked fitfully through the breaks of the driving clouds. "You must not reckon me a babbler," began the lady. "My husband says you have so generous a mind, that it is not right in us to hide aught from you. Only do not take my narrative for a fable, however strangely it may sound.

"I was born in a little village; my father was a poor herdsman. Our circumstances were not of the best; often we knew not where to find our daily bread. But what grieved

me far more than this, were the quarrels which my father and mother often had about their poverty, and the bitter reproaches they cast on one another. Of myself too, I heard nothing said but ill; they were forever telling me that I was a silly stupid child, that I could not do the simplest turn of work; and in truth I was extremely inexpert and helpless; I let things fall; I neither learned to sew nor spin; I could be of no use to my parents; only their straits I understood too well. Often I would sit in a corner, and fill my little heart with dreams, how I would help them, if I should all at once grow rich; how I would overflow them with silver and gold, and feast myself on their amazement; and then spirits came hovering up, and showed me buried treasures, or gave me little pebbles which changed into precious stones; in short, the strangest fancies occupied me, and when I had to rise and help with anything, my inexpertness was still greater, as my head was giddy with these motley visions.

"My father in particular was always very cross to me; he scolded me for being such a burden to the house; indeed he often used me rather cruelly, and it was very seldom that I got a friendly word from him. In this way I had struggled on to near the end of my eighth year; and now it was seriously fixed that I should begin to do or learn something. My father still maintained that it was nothing but caprice in me, or a lazy wish to pass my days in idleness: accordingly he set upon me with furious threats; and as these made no improvement, he one day gave me a most cruel chastisement, and added that the same should be repeated day after day, since I was nothing but a useless sluggard.

"That whole night I wept abundantly; I felt myself so utterly forsaken, I had such a sympathy with myself that I even longed to die. I dreaded the break of day; I knew not on earth what I was to do or try. I wished from my very heart to be clever, and could not understand how I should be worse than the other children of the place. I was on the borders of despair.

"At the dawn of day I arose, and scarcely knowing what I did, unfastened the door of our little hut. I stept upon the open field; next minute I was in a wood, where the light of the morning had yet hardly penetrated. I ran along, not looking round; for I felt no fatigue, and I still thought my father would catch me, and in his anger at my flight would beat me worse than ever.

"I had reached the other side of the forest, and the sun was risen a considerable way; I saw something dim lying before me, and a thick fog resting over it. Ere long my path began to mount, at one time I was climbing hills, at another winding among rocks; and I now guessed that I must be among the neighbouring Mountains; a thought that made me shudder in my loneliness. For, living in the plain country, I had never seen a hill; and the very word Mountains, when I heard talk of them, had been a sound of terror to my young ear. I had not the heart to go back, my fear itself drove me on; often I looked round affrighted when the breezes rustled over me among the trees, or the stroke of some distant woodman sounded far through the still morning. And when I began to meet with charcoal-men and miners, and heard their foreign way of speech, I had nearly fainted for terror.

"I passed through several villages; begging now and then, for I felt hungry and thirsty; and fashioning my answers as I best could when questions were put to me. In this manner I had wandered on some four days, when I came upon a little footpath, which led me farther and farther from the high-way. The rocks about me now assumed a different and far stranger form. They were cliffs so piled on one another, that it looked as if the first gust of wind would hurl them all this way and that. I knew not whether to go on or stop. Till now I had slept by night in the woods, for it was the finest season of the year, or in some remote shepherd's hut; but here I saw no human dwelling at all, and could not hope to find one in this wilderness; the crags grew

more and more frightful; I had many a time to glide along by the very edge of dreadful abysses; by degrees my foot-path became fainter, and at last all traces of it vanished from beneath me. I was utterly comfortless; I wept and screamed; and my voice came echoing back from the rocky valleys with a sound that terrified me. The night now came on, and I sought out a mossy nook to lie down in. I could not sleep; in the darkness I heard the strangest noises; sometimes I took them to proceed from wild beasts, sometimes from wind moaning through the rocks, sometimes from unknown birds. I prayed; and did not sleep till towards morning.

"When the light came upon my face, I awoke. Before me was a steep rock; I clomb up, in the hope of discovering some outlet from the waste, perhaps of seeing houses or men. But when I reached the top, there was nothing still, so far as my eye could reach, but a wilderness of crags and precipices; all was covered with a dim haze; the day was grey and troubled, and no tree, no meadow, not even a bush could I find, only a few shrubs shooting up stunted and solitary in the narrow clefts of the rocks. I cannot utter what a longing I felt but to see one human creature, any living mortal, even though I had been afraid of hurt from him. At the same time I was tortured by a gnawing hunger; I sat down, and made up my mind to die. After a while, however, the desire of living gained the mastery; I roused myself, and wandered forward amid tears and broken sobs all day; in the end, I hardly knew what I was doing; I was tired and spent; I scarcely wished to live, and yet I feared to die.

"Towards night the country seemed to grow a little kindlier; my thoughts, my desires revived, the wish for life awoke in all my veins. I thought I heard the rushing of a mill afar off; I redoubled my steps; and how glad, how light of heart was I, when at last I actually gained the limits of the barren rocks, and saw woods and meadows lying before

me, with soft green hills in the distance! I felt as if I had stept out of hell into a paradise; my loneliness and helplessness no longer frightened me.

"Instead of the hoped-for mill, I came upon a waterfall, which, in truth, considerably damped my joy. I was lifting a drink from it in the hollow of my hand, when all at once I thought I heard a slight cough some little way from me. Never in my life was I so joyfully surprised as at this moment: I went near, and at the border of the wood I saw an old woman sitting resting on the ground. She was dressed almost wholly in black; a black hood covered her head, and the greater part of her face; in her hand she held a crutch.

"I came up to her, and begged for help; she made me sit by her, and gave me bread, and a little wine. While I ate, she sang in a screeching tone some kind of spiritual song. When she had done, she told me I might follow her.

"The offer charmed me, strange as the old woman's voice and look appeared. With her crutch she limped away pretty fast, and at every step she twisted her face so oddly, that at first I was like to laugh. The wild rocks retired behind us more and more: I never shall forget the aspect and the feeling of that evening. All things were as molten into the softest golden red; the trees were standing with their tops in the glow of the sunset; on the fields lay a mild brightness; the woods and the leaves of the trees were standing motionless; the pure sky looked out like an open paradise, and the gushing of the brooks, and, from time to time, the rustling of the trees, resounded through the serene stillness, as in pensive joy. My young soul was here first taken with a forethought of the world and its vicissitudes. I forgot myself and my conductress; my spirit and my eyes were wandering among the shining clouds.

"We now mounted an eminence planted with birch-trees; from the top we looked into a green valley, likewise full of birches; and down below, in the middle of them, was a

little hut. A glad barking reached us, and immediately a little nimble dog came springing round the old woman, fawned on her, and wagged its tail; it next came to me, viewed me on all sides, and then turned back with a friendly look to its old mistress.

"On reaching the bottom of the hill, I heard the strangest song, as if coming from the hut, and sung by some bird. It ran thus:

Alone in wood so gay
'Tis good to stay,
Morrow like today,
Forever and aye:
O, I do love to stay
Alone in wood so gay.

"These few words were continually repeated, and to describe the sound, it was as if you heard forest-horns and shalms sounded together from a far distance.

"My curiosity was wonderfully on the stretch; without waiting for the old woman's orders, I stept into the hut. It was already dusk; here all was neatly swept and trimmed; some bowls were standing in a cupboard, some strange-looking casks or pots on a table; in a glittering cage, hanging by the window, was a bird, and this in fact proved to be the singer. The old woman coughed and panted: it seemed as if she never would get over her fatigue: she patted the little dog, she talked with the bird, which only answered her with its accustomed song; and for me, she did not seem to recollect that I was there at all. Looking at her so, many qualms and fears came over me; for her face was in perpetual motion; and, besides, her head shook from old age, so that, for my life, I could not understand what sort of countenance she had.

"Having gathered strength again, she lit a candle, covered a very small table, and brought out supper. She now looked round for me, and bade me take a little cane-chair. I was thus sitting close fronting her, with the light between us.

She folded her bony hands, and prayed aloud, still twisting her countenance, so that I was once more on the point of laughing; but I took strict care that I might not make her angry.

"After supper she again prayed, then showed me a bed in a low narrow closet; she herself slept in the room. I did not watch long, for I was half stupefied; but in the night I now and then awoke, and heard the old woman coughing, and between-whiles talking with her dog and her bird, which last seemed dreaming, and replied with only one or two words of its rhyme. This, with the birches rustling before the window, and the song of a distant nightingale, made such a wondrous combination, that I never fairly thought I was awake, but only falling out of one dream into another still stranger.

"The old woman awoke me in the morning, and soon after gave me work. I was put to spin, which I now learned very easily; I had likewise to take charge of the dog and the bird. I soon learned my business in the house: I now felt as if it all must be so; I never once remembered that the old woman had so many singularities, that her dwelling was mysterious, and lay apart from all men, and that the bird must be a very strange creature. Its beauty, indeed, always struck me, for its feathers glittered with all possible colours; the fairest deep blue, and the most burning red, alternated about his neck and body; and when singing, he blew himself proudly out, so that his feathers looked still finer.

"My old mistress often went abroad, and did not come again till night; on these occasions I went out to meet her with the dog, and she used to call me child and daughter. In the end I grew to like her heartily; as our mind, especially in childhood, will become accustomed and attached to anything. In the evenings she taught me to read; and this was afterwards a source of boundless satisfaction to me in my solitude, for she had several ancient-written books, that contained the strangest stories.

"The recollection of the life I then led is still singular to me: Visited by no human creature, secluded in the circle of so small a family; for the dog and the bird made the same impression on me which in other cases long-known friends produce. I am surprised that I have never since been able to recall the dog's name, a very odd one, often as I then pronounced it.

"Four years I had passed in this way (I must now have been nearly twelve), when my old dame began to put more trust in me, and at length told me a secret. The bird, I found, laid every day an egg, in which there was a pearl or a jewel. I had already noticed that she often went to fettle privately about the cage, but I had never troubled myself farther on the subject. She now gave me charge of gathering these eggs in her absence, and carefully storing them up in the strange-looking pots. She would leave me food, and sometimes stay away longer, for weeks, for months. My little wheel kept humming round, the dog barked, the bird sang; and withal there was such a stillness in the neighbourhood, that I do not recollect of any storm or foul weather all the time I stayed there. No one wandered thither; no wild beast came near our dwelling: I was satisfied, and worked along in peace from day to day. One would perhaps be very happy, could he pass his life so undisturbedly to the end.

"From the little that I read, I formed quite marvellous notions of the world and its people; all taken from myself and my society. When I read of witty persons, I could not figure them but like the little shock; great ladies, I conceived, were like the bird; all old women like my mistress. I had read somewhat of love, too; and often, in fancy, I would sport strange stories with myself. I figured out the fairest knight on Earth; adorned him with all perfections, without knowing rightly, after all my labour, how he looked: but I could feel a hearty pity for myself when he ceased to love me; I would then, in thought, make long melting

speeches, or perhaps aloud, to try if I could win him back. You smile! These young days are, in truth, far away from us all.

"I now liked better to be left alone, for I was then sole mistress of the house. The dog loved me, and did all I wanted; the bird replied to all my questions with his rhyme; my wheel kept briskly turning, and at bottom I had never any wish for change. When my dame returned from her long wanderings, she would praise my diligence; she said her house, since I belonged to it, was managed far more perfectly; she took a pleasure in my growth and healthy looks; in short, she treated me in all points like her daughter.

"'Thou art a good girl, child,' said she once to me, in her creaking tone; 'if thou continuest so, it will be well with thee: but none ever prospers when he leaves the straight path; punishment will overtake him, though it may be late.' I gave little heed to this remark of hers at the time, for in all my temper and movements I was very lively; but by night it occurred to me again, and I could not understand what she meant by it. I considered all the words attentively; I had read of riches, and at last it struck me that her pearls and jewels might perhaps be something precious. Ere long this thought grew clearer to me. But the straight path, and leaving it? What could she mean by this?

"I was now fourteen; it is the misery of man that he arrives at understanding through the loss of innocence. I now saw well enough that it lay with me to take the jewels and the bird in the old woman's absence, and go forth with them and see the world which I had read of. Perhaps, too, it would then be possible that I might meet that fairest of all knights, who forever dwelt in my memory.

"At first this thought was nothing more than any other thought; but when I used to be sitting at my wheel, it still returned to me, against my will; and I sometimes followed it so far, that I already saw myself adorned in splendid attire, with princes and knights around me. On awakening from

these dreams, I would feel a sadness when I looked up, and found myself still in the little cottage. For the rest, if I went through my duties, the old woman troubled herself little about what I thought or felt.

"One day she went out again, telling me that she should be away on this occasion longer than usual; that I must take strict charge of everything, and not let the time hang heavy on my hands. I had a sort of fear on taking leave of her, for I felt as if I should not see her any more. I looked long after her, and knew not why I felt so sad; it was almost as if my purpose had already stood before me, without myself being conscious of it.

"Never did I tend the dog and the bird with such diligence as now; they were nearer to my heart than formerly. The old woman had been gone some days, when I rose one morning in the firm mind to leave the cottage, and set out with the bird to see this world they talked so much of. I felt pressed and hampered in my heart; I wished to stay where I was, and yet the thought of that afflicted me; there was a strange contention in my soul, as if between two discordant spirits. One moment my peaceful solitude would seem to me so beautiful; the next the image of a new world, with its many wonders, would again enchant me.

"I knew not what to make of it; the dog leaped up continually about me; the sunshine spread abroad over the fields; the green birch-trees glittered; I always felt as if I had something I must do in haste; so I caught the little dog, tied him up in the room, and took the cage with the bird under my arm. The dog writhed and whined at this unusual treatment; he looked at me with begging eyes, but I feared to have him with me. I also took one pot of jewels, and concealed it by me; the rest I left.

"The bird turned its head very strangely when I crossed the threshold; the dog tugged at his cord to follow me, but he was forced to stay.

"I did not take the road to the wild rocks, but went in

the opposite direction. The dog still whined and barked, and it touched me to the heart to hear him; the bird tried once or twice to sing; but as I was carrying him, the shaking put him out.

"The farther I went, the fainter grew the barking, and at last it altogether ceased. I wept, and had almost turned back, but the longing to see something new still hindered me.

"I had got across the hills, and through some forests, when the night came on, and I was forced to turn aside into a village. I blushed exceedingly on entering the inn; they showed me to a room and bed; I slept pretty quietly, only that I dreamed of the old woman, and her threatening me.

"My journey had not much variety; the farther I went, the more was I afflicted by the recollection of my old mistress and the little dog; I considered that in all likelihood the poor shock would die of hunger, and often in the woods I thought my dame would suddenly meet me. Thus amid tears and sobs I went along; when I stopped to rest, and put the cage on the ground, the bird struck up his song, and brought but too keenly to my mind the fair habitation I had left. As human nature is forgetful, I imagined that my former journey, in my childhood, had not been so sad and woful as the present; I wished to be as I was then.

"I had sold some jewels; and now, after wandering on for several days, I reached a village. At the very entrance I was struck with something strange; I felt terrified and knew not why; but I soon bethought myself, for it was the village where I was born! How amazed was I! How the tears ran down my cheeks for gladness, for a thousand singular remembrances! Many things were changed: new houses had been built, some just raised when I went away were now fallen and had marks of fire on them; everything was far smaller and more confined than I had fancied. It rejoiced my very heart that I should see my parents once more after such an absence. I found their little cottage, the well-known threshold; the door-latch was standing as of old;

it seemed to me as if I had shut it only yesternight. My heart beat violently, I hastily lifted that latch; but faces I had never seen before looked up and gazed at me. I asked for the shepherd Martin; they told me that his wife and he were dead three years ago. I drew back quickly, and left the village weeping aloud.

"I had figured out so beautifully how I would surprise them with my riches: by the strangest chance, what I had only dreamed in childhood was become reality; and now it was all in vain, they could not rejoice with me, and that which had been my first hope in life was lost forever.

"In a pleasant town I hired a small house and garden, and took to myself a maid. The world, in truth, proved not so wonderful as I had painted it: but I forgot the old woman and my former way of life rather more, and, on the whole, I was contented.

"For a long while the bird had ceased to sing; I was therefore not a little frightened, when one night he suddenly began again, and with a different rhyme. He sang:

Alone in wood so gay,
Ah, far away!
But thou wilt say
Some other day,
'Twere best to stay
Alone in wood so gay.

"Throughout the night I could not close an eye; all things again occurred to my remembrance; and I felt, more than ever, that I had not acted rightly. When I rose, the aspect of the bird distressed me greatly; he looked at me continually, and his presence did me ill. There was now no end to his song; he sang it louder and more shrilly than he had been wont. The more I looked at him, the more he pained and frightened me; at last I opened the cage, put in my hand, and grasped his neck; I squeezed my fingers hard together, he looked at me, I slackened them; but he was dead. I buried him in the garden.

"After this, there often came a fear over me for my maid; I looked back upon myself, and fancied she might rob me or murder me. For a long while I had been acquainted with a young knight, whom I altogether liked: I bestowed on him my hand; and with this, Sir Walther, ends my story."

"Ay, you should have seen her then," said Eckbert warmly; "seen her youth, her loveliness, and what a charm her lonely way of life had given her. I had no fortune; it was through her love these riches came to me; we moved hither, and our marriage has at no time brought us anything but good."

"But with our tattling," added Bertha, "it is growing very late; we must go to sleep."

She rose, and proceeded to her chamber; Walther, with a kiss of her hand, wished her good-night, saying: "Many thanks, noble lady; I can well figure you beside your singing bird, and how you fed poor little *Strohmian*."

Walther likewise went to sleep; Eckbert alone still walked in a restless humour up and down the room. "Are not men fools?" said he at last: "I myself occasioned this recital of my wife's history, and now such confidence appears to me improper! Will he not abuse it? Will he not communicate the secret to others? Will he not, for such is human nature, cast unblessed thoughts on our jewels, and form pretexts and lay plans to get possession of them?"

It now occurred to his mind that Walther had not taken leave of him so cordially as might have been expected after such a mark of trust: the soul once set upon suspicion finds in every trifle something to confirm it. Eckbert, on the other hand, reproached himself for such ignoble feelings to his worthy friend; yet still he could not cast them out. All night he plagued himself with such uneasy thoughts, and got very little sleep.

Bertha was unwell next day, and could not come to breakfast; Walther did not seem to trouble himself much about her illness, but left her husband also rather coolly. Eckbert could not comprehend such conduct; he went to see his wife,

and found her in a feverish state; she said her last night's story must have agitated her.

From that day, Walther visited the castle of his friend but seldom; and when he did appear, it was but to say a few unmeaning words and then depart. Eckbert was exceedingly distressed by this demeanour: to Bertha or Walther he indeed said nothing of it; but to any person his internal disquietude was visible enough.

Bertha's sickness wore an aspect more and more serious; the Doctor grew alarmed; the red had vanished from his patient's cheeks, and her eyes were becoming more and more inflamed. One morning she sent for her husband to her bedside; the nurses were ordered to withdraw.

"Dear Eckbert," she began, "I must disclose a secret to thee, which has almost taken away my senses, which is ruining my health, unimportant trifle as it may appear. Thou mayest remember, often as I talked of my childhood, I could never call to mind the name of the dog that was so long beside me: now, that night on taking leave, Walther all at once said to me: 'I can well figure you, and how you fed poor little *Strohmian*.' Is it chance? Did he guess the name; did he know it, and speak it on purpose? If so, how stands this man connected with my destiny? At times I struggle with myself as if I but imagined this mysterious business; but, alas! it is certain, too certain. I felt a shudder that a stranger should help me to recall the memory of my secrets. What sayest thou, Eckbert?"

Eckbert looked at his sick and agitated wife with deep emotion; he stood silent and thoughtful; then spoke some words of comfort to her, and went out. In a distant chamber, he walked to and fro in indescribable disquiet. Walther, for many years, had been his sole companion; and now this person was the only mortal in the world whose existence pained and oppressed him. It seemed as if he should be gay and light of heart, were that one thing but removed. He took his bow, to dissipate these thoughts; and went to hunt.

It was a rough stormy winter-day; the snow was lying deep on the hills, and bending down the branches of the trees. He roved about; the sweat was standing on his brow; he found no game, and this embittered his ill-humour. All at once he saw an object moving in the distance; it was Walther gathering moss from the trunks of trees. Scarce knowing what he did, he bent his bow; Walther looked round, and gave a threatening gesture, but the arrow was already flying, and he sank transfixed by it.

Eckbert felt relieved and calmed, yet a certain horror drove him home to his castle. It was a good way distant; he had wandered far into the woods. On arriving, he found Bertha dead: before her death, she had spoken much of Walther and the old woman.

For a great while after this occurrence, Eckbert lived in the deepest solitude: he had all along been melancholy, for the strange history of his wife disturbed him, and he dreaded some unlucky incident or other; but at present he was utterly at variance with himself. The murder of his friend arose incessantly before his mind; he lived in the anguish of continual remorse.

To dissipate his feelings, he occasionally moved to the neighbouring town, where he mingled in society and its amusements. He longed for a friend to fill the void in his soul; and yet, when he remembered Walther, he would shudder at the thought of meeting with a friend; for he felt convinced that, with any friend, he must be unhappy. He had lived so long with his Bertha in lovely calmness; the friendship of Walther had cheered him through so many years; and now both of them were suddenly swept away. As he thought of these things, there were many moments when his life appeared to him some fabulous tale, rather than the actual history of a living man.

A young knight, named Hugo, made advances to the silent melancholy Eckbert, and appeared to have a true affection for him. Eckbert felt himself exceedingly surprised; he

met the knight's friendship with the greater readiness, the less he had anticipated it. The two were now frequently together; Hugo showed his friend all possible attentions; one scarcely ever went to ride without the other; in all companies they got together. In a word, they seemed inseparable.

Eckbert was never happy longer than a few transitory moments: for he felt too clearly that Hugo loved him only by mistake; that he knew him not, was unacquainted with his history; and he was seized again with the same old longing to unbosom himself wholly, that he might be sure whether Hugo was his friend or not. But again his apprehensions, and the fear of being hated and abhorred, withheld him. There were many hours in which he felt so much impressed with his entire worthlessness, that he believed no mortal not a stranger to his history, could entertain regard for him. Yet still he was unable to withstand himself: on a solitary ride, he disclosed his whole history to Hugo, and asked if he could love a murderer. Hugo seemed touched, and tried to comfort him. Eckbert returned to town with a lighter heart.

But it seemed to be his doom that, in the very hour of confidence, he should always find materials for suspicion. Scarcely had they entered the public hall, when, in the glitter of the many lights, Hugo's looks had ceased to satisfy him. He thought he noticed a malicious smile; he remarked that Hugo did not speak to him as usual; that he talked with the rest, and seemed to pay no heed to him. In the party was an old knight, who had always shown himself the enemy of Eckbert, had often asked about his riches and his wife in a peculiar style. With this man Hugo was conversing; they were speaking privately, and casting looks at Eckbert. The suspicions of the latter seemed confirmed; he thought himself betrayed, and a tremendous rage took hold of him. As he continued gazing, on a sudden he discerned the countenance of Walther, all his features, all the form so well known to

him; he gazed, and looked, and felt convinced that it was none but Walther who was talking to the knight. His horror cannot be described; in a state of frenzy he rushed out of the hall, left the town overnight, and after many wanderings, returned to his castle.

Here, like an unquiet spirit, he hurried to and fro from room to room; no thought would stay with him; out of one frightful idea he fell into another still more frightful, and sleep never visited his eyes. Often he believed that he was mad, that a disturbed imagination was the origin of all this terror; then, again, he recollected Walther's features, and the whole grew more and more a riddle to him. He resolved to take a journey, that he might reduce his thoughts to order; the hope of friendship, the desire of social intercourse, he had now forever given up.

He set out, without prescribing to himself any certain route; indeed, he took small heed of the country he was passing through. Having hastened on some days at the quickest pace of his horse, he, on a sudden, found himself entangled in a labyrinth of rocks, from which he could discover no outlet. At length he met an old peasant, who took him by a path leading past a waterfall: he offered him some coins for his guidance, but the peasant would not have them. "What use is it?" said Eckbert. "I could believe that this man, too, was none but Walther." He looked round once more, and it was none but Walther. Eckbert spurred his horse as fast as it could gallop, over meads and forests, till it sank exhausted to the earth. Regardless of this, he hastened forward on foot.

In a dreamy mood he mounted a hill: he fancied he caught the sound of lively barking at a little distance; the birch-trees whispered in the intervals, and in the strangest notes he heard this song:

Alone in wood so gay,
Once more I stay;
None dare me slay,

The evil far away :
Ah, here I stay,
Alone in wood so gay.

The sense, the consciousness of Eckbert had departed ; it was a riddle which he could not solve, whether he was dreaming now, or had before dreamed of a wife and friend. The marvellous was mingled with the common : the world around him seemed enchanted, and he himself was incapable of thought or recollection.

A crooked, bent old woman, crawled coughing up the hill with a crutch. "Art thou bringing me my bird, my pearls, my dog?" cried she to him. "See how injustice punishes itself! No one but I was Walther, was Hugo."

"God of Heaven!" said Eckbert, muttering to himself; "in what frightful solitude have I passed my life?"

"And Bertha was thy sister."

Eckbert sank to the ground.

"Why did she leave me deceitfully? All would have been fair and well; her time of trial was already finished. She was the daughter of a knight, who had her nursed in a shepherd's house; the daughter of thy father."

"Why have I always had a forecast of this dreadful thought?" cried Eckbert.

"Because in early youth thy father told thee : he could not keep this daughter by him for his second wife, her stepmother."

Eckbert lay distracted and dying on the ground. Faint and bewildered, he heard the old woman speaking, the dog barking, and the bird repeating its song.

THE TRUSTY ECKART

Brave Burgundy no longer
Could fight for fatherland ;
The foe they were the stronger,
Upon the bloody sand.

He said : "The foe prevaileth,
My friends and followers fly,
My striving naught availeth,
My spirits sink and die.

No more can I exert me,
Or sword and lance can wield ;
O, why did he desert me,
Eckart, our trusty shield !

In fight he used to guide me,
In danger was my stay ;
Alas, he 's not beside me,
But stays at home today !

The crowds are gathering faster,
Took captive shall I be?
I may not run like dastard,
I'll die like soldier free."

Thus Burgundy so bitter,
Has at his breast his sword ;
When, see, breaks-in the Ritter
Eckart, to save his lord !

With cap and armour glancing,
Bold on the foe he rides,
His troop behind him prancing,
And his two sons besides.

Burgundy sees their token,
And cries: "Now, God be praised!
Not yet we're beat or broken,
Since Eckart's flag is raised."

Then like a true knight, Eckart
Dash'd gaily through the foe:
But with his red blood flecker'd,
His little son lay low.

And when the fight was ended,
Then Burgundy he speaks:
"Thou hast me well befriended,
Yet so as wets my cheeks.

The foe is smote and flying;
Thou 'st saved my land and life;
But here thy boy is lying,
Returns not from the strife."

Then Eckart wept almost,
The tear stood in his eye;
He clasp'd the son he 'd lost,
Close to his breast the boy.

"Why diedst thou, Heinz, so early,
And scarce wast yet a man?
Thou 'rt fallen in battle fairly;
For thee I 'll not complain.

Thee, Prince, we have deliver'd;
From danger thou art free:
The boy and I are sever'd;
I give my son to thee."

Then Burgundy our chief,
His eyes grew moist and dim;
He felt such joy and grief,
So great that love to him.

His heart was melting, flaming,
He fell on Eckart's breast,
With sobbing voice exclaiming:
"Eckart, my champion best,

Thou stoodst when every other
Had fled from me away;
Therefore thou art my brother
Forever from this day.

The people shall regard thee
As wert thou of my line;
And could I more reward thee,
How gladly were it thine!"

And when we heard the same,
We joy'd as did our prince;
And Trusty Eckart is the name
We 've call'd him ever since.

The voice of an old peasant sounded over the rocks, as he sang this ballad; and the Trusty Eckart sat in his grief, on the declivity of the hill, and wept aloud. His youngest boy was standing by him: "Why weepest thou aloud, my father Eckart?" said he: "Art thou not great and strong, taller and braver than any other man? Whom, then, art thou afraid of?"

Meanwhile the Duke of Burgundy was moving homewards to his Tower. Burgundy was mounted on a stately horse, with splendid trappings; and the gold and jewels of the princely Duke were glittering in the evening sun; so that little Conrad could not sate himself with viewing and admiring the magnificent procession. The Trusty Eckart rose, and looked gloomily over it; and young Conrad, when the hunting train had disappeared, struck up this stave:

On good steed,
Sword and shield
Wouldst thou wield,
With spear and arrow;
Then had need
That the marrow
In thy arm,
That thy heart and blood
Be good,
To save thy head from harm.

The old man clasped his son to his bosom, looking with wistful tenderness on his clear blue eyes. "Didst thou hear that good man's song?" said he.

"Ay, why not?" answered Conrad: "he sang it loud enough, and thou art the Trusty Eckart thyself, so I liked to listen."

"That same Duke is now my enemy," said Eckart; "he keeps my other son in prison, nay, has already put him to death, if I may credit what the people say."

"Take down thy broad-sword, and do not suffer it," cried Conrad; "they will tremble to see thee, and all the people in the whole land will stand by thee, for thou art their greatest hero in the land."

"Not so, my son," said the other; "I were then the man my enemies have called me; I dare not be unfaithful to my liege; no, I dare not break the peace which I have pledged to him, and promised on his hand."

"But what wants he with us, then?" said Conrad impatiently.

Eckart sat down again, and said: "My son, the entire story of it would be long, and thou wouldst scarcely understand it. The great have always their worst enemy in their own hearts, and they fear it day and night; so Burgundy has now come to think that he has trusted me too far; that he has nursed in me a serpent in his bosom. People call me the stoutest warrior in our country; they say openly that he owes me land and life; I am named the Trusty Eckart; and thus oppressed and suffering persons turn to me, that I may get them help. All this he cannot suffer. So he has taken up a grudge against me; and every one that wants to rise in favour with him increases his distrust; so that at last he has quite turned away his heart from me."

Hereupon the hero Eckart told, in smooth words, how Burgundy had banished him from his sight, how they had become entire strangers to each other, as the Duke suspected that he even meant to rob him of his dukedom. In trouble and sorrow, he proceeded to relate how the Duke had cast

his son into confinement, and was threatening the life of Eckart himself, as of a traitor to the land.

But Conrad said to his father: "Wilt thou let me go, my old father, and speak with the Duke, to make him reasonable and kind to thee? If he has killed my brother, then he is a wicked man, and thou must punish him; but that cannot be, for he could not so falsely forget the great service thou hast done him."

"Dost thou know the old proverb?" said Eckart:

> "'Doth the king require thy aid,
> Thou'rt a friend can ne'er be paid;
> Hast thou help'd him through his trouble,
> Friendship's grown an empty bubble.'

Yes; my whole life has been wasted in vain. Why did he make me great, to cast me down the deeper? The friendship of princes is like a deadly poison, which can only be employed against our enemies, and with which at last we unwarily kill ourselves."

"I will to the Duke," cried Conrad: "I will call back into his soul all that thou hast done, that thou hast suffered for him; and he will again be as of old."

"Thou hast forgot," said Eckart, "that they look on us as traitors. Therefore let us fly together to some foreign country, where a better fortune may betide us."

"At thy age," said Conrad, "wilt thou turn away thy face from thy kind home? I will to Burgundy; I will quiet him, and reconcile him to thee. What can he do to me, even though he still hate and fear thee?"

"I let thee go unwillingly," said Eckart; "for my soul forebodes no good; and yet I would fain be reconciled to him, for he is my old friend; and fain save thy brother, who is pining in the dungeon beside him."

The sun threw his last mild rays on the green Earth: Eckart sat pensively leaning back against a tree; he looked long at Conrad, then said: "If thou wilt go, my little boy,

go now, before the night grow altogether dark. The windows in the Duke's Castle are already glittering with lights, and I hear afar off the sound of trumpets from the feast; perhaps his son's bride may have arrived, and his mind may be friendlier to us."

Unwillingly he let him go, for he no longer trusted to his fortune: but Conrad's heart was light; for he thought it would be an easy task to turn the mind of Burgundy, who had played with him so kindly but a short while before. "Wilt thou come back to me, my little boy?" sobbed Eckart: "if I lose thee, no other of my race remains." The boy consoled him; flattered him with caresses: at last they parted.

Conrad knocked at the gate of the Castle, and was let in; old Eckart stayed without in the night alone. "Him too have I lost," moaned he in his solitude; "I shall never see his face again."

Whilst he so lamented, there came tottering towards him a grey-haired man; endeavouring to get down the rocks; and seeming, at every step, to fear that he should stumble into the abyss. Seeing the old man's feebleness, Eckart held out his hand to him, and helped him to descend in safety.

"Which way come ye?" inquired Eckart.

The old man sat down, and began to weep, so that the tears came running over his cheeks. Eckart tried to soothe him and console him with reasonable words; but the sorrowful old man seemed not at all to heed these well-meant speeches, but to yield himself the more immoderately to his sorrows.

"What grief can it be that lies so heavy on you as to overpower you utterly?" said Eckart.

"Ah, my children!" moaned the old man.

Then Eckart thought of Conrad, Heinz, and Dietrich, and was himself altogether comfortless. "Yes, said he, "if your children are dead, your misery in truth is very great."

"Worse than dead," replied the old man, with his mourn-

ful voice; "for they are not dead, but lost forever to me. O, would to Heaven that they were but dead!"

These strange words astonished Eckart, and he asked the old man to explain the riddle; whereupon the latter answered: "The age we live in is indeed a marvellous age, and surely the last days are at hand; for the most dreadful signs are sent into the world, to threaten it. Every sort of wickedness is casting off its old fetters, and stalking bold and free about the Earth; the fear of God is drying up and dispersing, and can find no channel to unite in; and the Powers of Evil are rising audaciously from their dark nooks, and celebrating their triumph. Ah, my dear sir! we are old, but not old enough for such prodigious things. You have doubtless seen the Comet, that wondrous light in the sky, that shines so prophetically down upon us? All men predict evil; and no one thinks of beginning the reform with himself, and so essaying to turn off the rod. Nor is this enough; but portents are also issuing from the Earth, and breaking mysteriously from the depths below, even as the light shines frightfully on us from above. Have you never heard of the Hill, which people call the Hill of Venus?"

"Never," said Eckart, "far as I have travelled."

"I am surprised at that," replied the old man; "for the matter is now grown as notorious as it is true. To this Mountain have the Devils fled, and sought shelter in the desert centre of the Earth, according as the growth of our Holy Faith has cast down the idolatrous worship of the Heathen. Here, they say, before all others, Lady Venus keeps her court, and all her hellish hosts of worldly Lusts and forbidden Wishes gather round her, so that the Hill has been accursed since time immemorial."

"But in what country lies the Hill?" inquired Eckart.

"There is the secret," said the old man, "that no one can tell this, except he have first given himself up to be Satan's servant; and, indeed, no guiltless person ever thinks of seeking it out. A wonderful Musician on a sudden issues

from below, whom the Powers of Hell have sent as their ambassador; he roams through the world, and plays, and makes music on a pipe, so that his tones sound far and wide. And whoever hears these sounds is seized by him with visible yet inexplicable force, and drawn on, on, into the wilderness; he sees not the road he travels; he wanders, and wanders, and is not weary; his strength and his speed go on increasing; no power can restrain him; but he runs frantic into the Mountain, from which he can nevermore return. This power has, in our day, been restored to Hell; and in this inverse direction, the ill-starred, perverted pilgrims are travelling to a Shrine where no deliverance awaits them, or can reach them any more. For a long while, my two sons had given me no contentment; they were dissolute and immoral; they despised their parents, as they did religion; but now the Sound has caught and carried them off, they are gone into unseen kingdoms; the world was too narrow for them, they are seeking room in Hell."

"And what do you intend to do in such a mystery?" said Eckart.

"With this crutch I set out," replied the old man, "to wander through the world, to find them again, or die of weariness and woe."

So saying, he tore himself from his rest with a strong effort; and hastened forth with his utmost speed, as if he had found himself neglecting his most precious earthly hope; and Eckart looked with compassion on his vain toil, and rated him in his thoughts as mad.

It had been night, and was now day, and Conrad came not back. Eckart wandered to and fro among the rocks, and turned his longing eyes on the Castle; still he did not see him. A crowd came issuing through the gate; and Eckart no longer heeded to conceal himself; but mounted his horse, which was grazing in freedom; and rode into the middle of the troop, who were now proceeding merrily and carelessly across the plain. On his reaching them, they recognised him;

but no one laid a hand on him, or said a hard word to him; they stood mute for reverence, surrounded him in admiration, and then went their way. One of the squires he called back, and asked him: "Where is my Conrad?"

"O! ask me not," replied the squire; "it would but cause you sorrow and lamenting."

"And Dietrich?" cried the father.

"Name not their names any more," said the aged squire, "for they are gone; the wrath of our master was kindled against them, and he meant to punish you in them."

A hot rage mounted up in Eckart's soul; and, for sorrow and fury, he was no longer master of himself. He dashed the spurs into his horse, and rode through the Castle-gate. All drew back, with timid reverence, from his way; and thus he rode on to the front of the Palace. He sprang from horseback, and mounted the great steps with wavering pace. "Am I here in the dwelling of the man," said he, within himself, "who was once my friend?" He endeavoured to collect his thoughts; but wilder and wilder images kept moving in his eye, and thus he stept into the Prince's chamber.

Burgundy's presence of mind forsook him, and he trembled as Eckart stood in his presence. "Art thou the Duke of Burgundy?" said Eckart to him. To which the Duke answered, "Yes."

"And thou hast killed my son Dietrich?" The Duke said, "Yes."

"And my little Conrad too," cried Eckart, in his grief, "was not too good for thee, and thou hast killed him also?" To which the Duke again answered, "Yes."

Here Eckart was unmanned, and said, in tears: "O! answer me not so, Burgundy; for I cannot bear these speeches. Tell me but that thou art sorry, that thou wishest it were yet undone, and I will try to comfort myself; but thus thou art utterly offensive to my heart."

The Duke said: "Depart from my sight, false traitor; for thou art the worst enemy I have on Earth."

Eckart said: "Thou hast of old called me thy friend; but these thoughts are now far from thee. Never did I act against thee; still have I honoured and loved thee as my prince; and God forbid that I should now, as I well might, lay my hand upon my sword, and seek revenge of thee. No, I will depart from thy sight, and die in solitude."

So saying, he went out; and Burgundy was moved in his mind; but at his call, the guards appeared with their lances, who encircled him on all sides, and motioned to drive Eckart from the chamber with their weapons.

To horse the hero springs,
Wild through the hills he rideth:
"Of hope in earthly things,
Now none with me abideth.

My sons are slain in youth,
I have no child or wife;
The Prince suspects my truth,
Has sworn to take my life."

Then to the wood he turns him,
There gallops on and on;
The smart of sorrow burns him,
He cries: "They're gone, they're gone!

All living men from me are fled,
New friends I must provide me,
To the oaks and firs beside me,
Complain in desert dead.

There is no child to cheer me,
By cruel wolves they're slain;
Once three of them were near me,
I see them not again."

As Eckart cried thus sadly,
His sense it pass'd away;
He rides in fury madly
Till dawning of the day.

His horse in frantic speed
Sinks down at last exhausted;
And naught does Eckart heed,
Or think or know what caused it,

But on the cold ground lie,
Not fearing, loving longer;
Despair grows strong and stronger,
He wishes but to die.

No one about the Castle knew whither Eckart had gone; for he had lost himself in the waste forests, and let no man see him. The Duke dreaded his intentions; and he now repented that he had let him go, and not laid hold of him. So, one morning, he set forth with a great train of hunters and attendants, to search the woods, and find out Eckart; for he thought, that till Eckart were destroyed, there could be no security. All were unwearied, and regardless of toil; but the sun set without their having found a trace of Eckart.

A storm came on, and great clouds flew blustering over the forest; the thunder rolled, and lightning struck the tall oaks: all present were seized with an unquiet terror, and they gradually dispersed among the bushes, or the open spaces of the wood. The Duke's horse plunged into the thicket; his squires could not follow him: the gallant horse rushed to the ground; and Burgundy in vain called through the tempest to his servants; for there was no one that could hear him.

Like a wild man had Eckart roamed about the woods, unconscious of himself or his misfortunes; he had lost all thought, and in blank stupefaction satisfied his hunger with roots and herbs: the hero could not now be recognised by any one, so sore had the days of his despair defaced him. As the storm came on, he awoke from his stupefaction, and again felt his existence and his woes, and saw the misery that had befallen him. He raised a loud cry of lamentation for his children; he tore his white hair, and called out, in the bellowing of the storm: "Whither, whither are ye gone, ye parts of my heart? And how is all strength departed from me, that I could not even avenge your death? Why did I hold back my arm, and did not send to death him who had given my heart these deadly stabs? Ha, fool, thou deservest that the tyrant should mock thee, since thy power-

less arm and thy silly heart withstood not the murderer: Now, O now were he with me! But it is in vain to wish for vengeance, when the moment is gone by."

Thus came on the night, and Eckart wandered to and fro in his sorrow. From a distance he heard as it were a voice calling for help. Directing his steps by the sound, he came up to a man in the darkness, who was leaning on the stem of a tree, and mournfully entreating to be guided to his road. Eckart started at the voice, for it seemed familiar to him; but he soon recovered, and perceived that the lost wayfarer was the Duke of Burgundy. Then he raised his hand to his sword, to cut down the man who had been the murderer of his children; his fury came on him with new force, and he was upon the point of finishing his bloody task, when all at once he stopped, for his oath and the word he had pledged came into his mind. He took his enemy's hand, and led him to the quarter where he thought the road must be

The Duke foredone and weary
Sank in the wilder'd breaks;
Him in the tempest dreary
He on his shoulders takes.

Said Burgundy: "I 'm giving
Much toil to thee, I fear."
Eckart replied: "The living
On Earth have much to bear."

"Yet," said the Duke, "believe me,
Were we out of the wood,
Since now thou dost relieve me,
Thy sorrows I 'll make good."

The hero at this promise
Felt on his cheek the tear;
Said he: "Indeed I nowise
Do look for payment here."

"Harder our plight is growing,"
The Duke cries, dreading scath,
"Now whither are we going?
Who art thou? Art thou Death?"

"Not Death," said he, still weeping,
"Or any fiend am I;
Thy life is in God's keeping,
Thy ways are in his eye."

"Ah," said the Duke, repenting,
"My breast is foul within;
I tremble, while lamenting,
Lest God requite my sin.

My truest friend I 've banish'd,
His children have I slain,
In wrath from me he vanish'd,
As foe he comes again.

To me he was devoted,
Through good report and bad;
My rights he still promoted,
The truest man I had.

Me he can never pardon,
I kill'd his children dear;
This night, to pay my guerdon,
I' th' wood he lurks, I fear.

This does my conscience teach me,
A threat'ning voice within;
If here to-night he reach me,
I die a child of sin."

Said Eckart: "The beginning
Of our woes is guilt;
My grief is for thy sinning,
And for the blood thou 'st spilt.

And that the man will meet thee
Is likewise surely true;
Yet fear not, I entreat thee,
He 'll harm no hair of you."

Thus were they going forward talking, when another person in the forest met them; it was Wolfram, the Duke's Squire, who had long been looking for his master. The dark night was still lying over them, and no star twinkled from between the wet black clouds. The Duke felt weaker, and longed to reach some lodging, where he might sleep till

day; besides, he was afraid that he might meet with Eckart, who stood like a spectre before his soul. He imagined he should never see the morning; and shuddered anew when the wind again rustled through the high trees, and the storm came down from the hollows of the mountains, and went rushing over his head. "Wolfram," cried the Duke, in his anguish, "climb one of these tall pines, and look about if thou canst spy no light, no house or cottage, whither we may turn."

The Squire, at the hazard of his life, clomb up a lofty pine, which the storm was waving from the one side to the other, and ever and anon bending down the top of it to the very ground; so that the Squire wavered to and fro upon it like a little squirrel. At last he reached the top, and cried: "Down there, in the valley, I see the glimmer of a candle; thither must we turn." So he descended and showed the way; and in a while, they all perceived the cheerful light; at which the Duke once more took heart. Eckart still continued mute, and occupied within himself; he spoke no word, and looked at his inward thoughts. On arriving at the hut, they knocked; and a little old housewife let them in: as they entered, the stout Eckart set the Duke down from his shoulders, who threw himself immediately upon his knees, and in a fervent prayer thanked God for his deliverance. Eckart took his seat in a dark corner; and there he found fast asleep the poor old man, who had lately told him of his great misery about his sons, and the search he was making for them.

When the Duke had done praying, he said: "Very strange have my thoughts been this night, and the goodness of God and his almighty power never showed themselves so openly before to my obdurate heart: my mind also tells me that I have not long to live; and I desire nothing save that God would pardon me my manifold and heavy sins. You two, also, who have led me hither, I could wish to recompense, so far as in my power, before my end arrive. To thee,

Wolfram, I give both the castles that are on these hills beside us; and in future, in remembrance of this awful night, thou shalt call them the Tannenhäuser, or Pinehouses. But who art thou, strange man," continued he, "that hast placed thyself there in the nook, apart? Come forth, that I may also pay thee for thy toil."

Then rose the hero from his place,
And stept into the light before them;
Deep lines of woe were on his face,
But with a patient mind he bore them.

And Burgundy, his heart forsook him,
To see that mild old grey-hair'd man;
His face grew pale, a trembling took him,
He swoon'd and sank to earth again.

"O, saints of heaven," he wakes and cries,
"Is't thou that art before my eyes?
How shall I fly? Where shall I hide me?
Was't thou that in the wood didst guide me?
I kill'd thy children young and fair,
Me in thy arms how couldst thou bear?"

Thus Burgundy goes on to wail,
And feels the heart within him fail;
Death is at hand, remorse pursues him,
With streaming eyes he sinks on Eckart's bosom;
And Eckart whispers to him low:
"Henceforth I have forgot the slight,
So thou and all the world may know,
Eckart was still thy trusty knight."

Thus passed the hours till morning, when some other servants of the Duke arrived, and found their dying master. They laid him on a mule, and took him back to his castle. Eckart he could not suffer from his side; he would often take his hand and press it to his breast, and look at him with an imploring look. Then Eckart would embrace him, and speak a few kind words to him, and so the Prince would feel composed. At last he summoned all his Council, and declared to them that he appointed Eckart, the trusty man, to

be guardian of his sons, seeing he had proved himself the noblest of all. And thus he died.

Thenceforward Eckart took on him the government with all zeal; and every person in the land admired his high manly spirit. Not long afterwards a rumour spread abroad in all quarters, of a strange Musician, who had come from Venus-Hill, who was travelling through the whole land, and seducing men with his playing, so that they disappeared, and no one could find any traces of them. Many credited the story, others not; Eckart recollected the unhappy old man.

"I have taken you for my sons," said he to the young Princes, as he once stood with them on the hill before the Castle; "your happiness must now be my posterity; when dead, I shall still live in your joy." They lay down on the slope, from which the fair country was visible for many a league; and here Eckart had to guard himself from speaking of his children; for they seemed as if coming towards him from the distant mountains, while he heard afar off a lovely sound.

"Comes it not like dreams
Stealing o'er the vales and streams?
Out of regions far from this,
Like the song of souls in bliss?"

This to the youths did Eckart say,
And caught the sound from far away;
And as the magic tones came nigher,
A wicked strange desire
Awakens in the breasts of these pure boys,
That drives them forth to seek for unknown joys.

"Come, let's to the fields, to the meadows and mountains,
The forests invite us, the streams and the fountains;
Soft voices in secret for loitering chide us,
Away to the Garden of Pleasure they'll guide us."

The Player comes in foreign guise,
Appears before their wondering eyes;
And higher swells the music's sound,
And brighter glows the emerald ground;

The flowers appear as drunk,
Twilight red has on them sunk;
And through the green grass play, with airy brightness,
Soft, fitful, blue and golden streaks of brightness.
Like a shadow, melts and flits away
All that bound men to this world of clay;
In Earth all toil and tumult cease,
Like one bright flower it blooms in peace;
The mountains rock in purple light,
The valleys shout as with delight;
All rush and whirl in the music's noise,
And long to share of these offer'd joys;
The soul of man is allured to gladness,
And lies entranced in that blissful madness.

The Trusty Eckart felt it,
But wist not of the cause;
His heart the music melted,
He wonder'd what it was.

The world seems new and fairer,
All blooming like the rose;
Can Eckart be a sharer
In raptures such as those?

"Ha! Are those tones restoring
My wife and bonny sons?
All that I was deploring,
My lost belovèd ones?"

Yet soon his sense collected
Brought doubt within his breast;
These hellish arts detected,
A horror him possess'd.

And now he sees the raging
Of his young princes dear;
Themselves to Hell engaging,
His voice no more they hear.

And forth, in wild commotion,
They rush, not knowing where;
In tumult like the ocean,
When mad his billows are.

Then, as these things assail'd him,
He wist not what to do;
His knighthood almost fail'd him
Amid that hellish crew.

Then to his soul appeareth
The hour the Duke did die;
His friend's faint prayer he heareth,
He sees his fading eye.

And so his mind's in armour,
And hope is conquering fear;
When see, the fiendish Charmer
Himself comes piping near!

His sword to draw he essayeth,
And smite the caitiff dead;
But as the music playeth,
His strength is from him fled.

And from the mountains issue
Crowds of distorted forms,
Of Dwarfs a boundless tissue
Come simmering round in swarms.

The youths, possess'd, are running
As frantic in the crowd:
In vain is force or cunning;
In vain to call aloud.

And hurries on by castle,
By tower and town, the rout;
Like imps in hellish wassail,
With cackling laugh and shout.

He too is in the rabble;
May not resist their force,
Must hear their deafening babble,
Attend their frantic course.

But now the Hill appeareth,
And music comes thereout;
And as the Phantoms hear it,
They halt, and raise a shout.

The Mountain starts asunder,
A motley crowd is seen;
This way and that they wander,
In red unearthly sheen.

Then his broad-sword he drew it,
And says: "Still true, though lost!"
And with mad force he heweth
Through that Infernal host.

His youths he sees (how gladly!)
Escaping through the vale;
The Fiends are fighting madly,
And threatening to prevail.

The Dwarfs, when hurt, fly downward,
And rise up cured again;
And other crowds rush onward,
And fight with might and main.

Then saw he from a distance
The children safe, and cried:
"They need not my assistance,
I care not what betide."

His good broad-sword doth glitter
And flash i' th' noontide ray;
The Dwarfs, with wailing bitter,
And howls, depart away.

Safe at the valley's ending,
The youths far off he spies;
Then faint and wounded, bending,
The hero falls and dies.

So his last hour o'ertook him,
Fighting like lion brave;
His truth, it ne'er forsook him,
He was faithful to the grave.

Now Eckart having perish'd,
The eldest son bore sway;
His memory still he cherish'd,
With grateful heart would say:

"From foes and wreck to save me,
Like lion grim he fought;
My throne, my life, he gave me,
And with his heart's blood bought."

And soon a wondrous rumour
The country round did fill,
That when a desp'rate humour
Doth send one to the Hill,

There straight a Shape will meet him,
The Trusty Eckart's ghost,
And wistfully entreat him
To turn, and not be lost.

There he, though dead, yet ever
True watch and ward doth hold;
Upon the Earth shall never
Be man so true and bold.

PART II

More than four centuries had elapsed since the Trusty Eckart's death, when a noble Tannenhäuser, in the station of Imperial Counsellor, was living at Court in the highest estimation. The son of this knight surpassed in beauty all the other nobles of the land, and on this account was loved and prized by every one. Suddenly, however, after some mysterious incidents had been observed to happen to him, the young man disappeared; and no one knew or guessed what was become of him. Since the times of the Trusty Eckart, there had always been a story current in the land about the Venus-Hill; and many said that he had wandered thither, and was lost forever.

One of those that most lamented him was his young friend Friedrich von Wolfsburg. They had grown up together, and their mutual attachment seemed to each of them to have become a necessary of life. Tannenhäuser's old father died:

Friedrich married some years afterwards; already was a ring of merry children round him, and still he heard no tidings of his youthful friend; so that, in the end, he was forced to conclude him dead.

He was standing one evening under the gate of his Castle, when he perceived afar off a pilgrim travelling towards the mansion. The wayfaring man was clad in a strange garb; and his gait and gestures the Knight thought extremely singular. On his approaching nearer, Wolfsburg thought that he knew him; and at last he became convinced that the stranger was no other than his long-lost friend, the Tannenhäuser. He felt amazed, and a secret horror took possession of him, as he recognised distinctly these much-altered features.

The two friends embraced; then started back next moment; and gazed astonished at each other as at unknown beings. Of questions, of perplexed replies, were many. Friedrich often shuddered at the wild look of his friend, which seemed to burn as with unearthly light. The Tannenhäuser had reposed himself a day or two, when Friedrich learned that he was on a pilgrimage to Rome.

The two friends by and by renewed their former intimacy, took up their old topics, and told stories to each other of their youth; but the Tannenhäuser always carefully concealed where he had been since then. Friedrich, however, pressed him to disclose it, now that they were once more on their ancient confidential footing: the other long endeavoured to ward off the friendly prayer; but at last he exclaimed: "Well, be it so; thy will be done! Thou shalt know all; but cast no reproaches on me after, should the story fill thee with inquietude and horror."

They went into the open air, and walked a little in a green wood of the pleasure-grounds, where at last they sat down; and now the Tannenhäuser hid his face among the grass, and, with loud sobs, held back his right hand to his friend, who pressed it tenderly in his. The woe-worn pilgrim raised himself, and began his story in the following words:

"Believe me, Wolfsburg, many a man has, at his birth, an Evil Spirit linked to him, that vexes him through life, and never lets him rest, till he has reached his black destination. So has it been with me; my whole existence has been but a continuing birth-pain, and my awakening will be in Hell. For this have I already wandered so many weary steps, and have so many yet before me on the pilgrimage which I am making to the Holy Father, that I may endeavour to obtain forgiveness at Rome. In his presence will I lay down the heavy burden of my sins; or fall beneath it, and die despairing."

Friedrich attempted to console him, but the Tannenhäuser seemed to pay little heed to what he said; and, after a short while, he proceeded in the following words: "There is an old legend of a Knight who is said to have lived many centuries ago, under the name of the Trusty Eckart. They tell how, in those days, a Musician issued from some marvellous Hill; and, by his magic tones, awoke in the hearts of all that heard him so deep a longing, such wild wishes, that he led them irresistibly along with his music, and forced them to rush in with him to the Hill. Hell had then opened wide her gates to poor mortals, and enticed them in with seductive music. In boyhood I often heard this story, and at first without particularly minding it; yet ere long it so took hold of me, that all Nature, every sound, every flower, recalled to me the story of these heart-subduing tones. I cannot tell thee what a sadness, what an unutterable longing used to seize me, when I looked on the driving of the clouds, and saw the light lordly blue peering out between them; or what remembrances the meadows and the woods would awaken in my deepest heart. Oftentimes the loveliness and fulness of royal Nature so affected me, that I stretched out my arms, as if to fly away with wings; that I might pour myself out like the Spirit of Nature over mountain and valley: that I might brood over grass and forest, and inhale the riches of her blessedness. And if by day the free landscape charmed me, by night dark

dreaming fantasies tormented me; and set themselves in louring grimness before me, as if to shut up my path of life forever. Above all, there was one dream that left an ineffaceable impression on my feelings, though I never could distinctly call the forms of it to memory. Methought there was a vast tumult in the streets; I heard confused unintelligible speaking; it was dark night; I went to my parents' house; none but my father was there, and he sick. Next morning I clasped my parents in my arms, and pressed them with melting tenderness to my breast, as if some hostile power had been about to tear them from me. 'Am I to lose thee?' said I to my father. 'O! how wretched and lonely were I without thee in this world!' They tried to comfort me, but could not wipe away the dim image from my remembrance.

"I grew older, still keeping myself apart from other boys of my age. I often roamed solitary through the fields: and it happened one morning, in my rambles, that I had lost my way; and so was wandering to and fro in a thick wood, not knowing whither to turn. After long seeking vainly for a road, I at last on a sudden came upon an iron-grated fence, within which lay a garden. Through the bars, I saw fair shady walks before me; fruit-trees and flowers; and close by me were rose-bushes glittering in the sun. A nameless longing for these roses seized me; I could not help rushing on; I pressed myself by force through between the bars, and was now standing in the garden. Immediately I sank on my knees; clasped the bushes in my arms; kissed the roses on their red lips, and melted into tears. I had knelt a while, absorbed in a sort of rapture, when there came two maidens through the alleys; the one of my own years, the other elder. I awoke from my trance, to fall into a higher ecstasy. My eye lighted on the younger, and I felt at this moment as if all my unknown woe was healed. They took me to the house; their parents, having learned my name, sent notice to my father, who, in the evening, came himself, and brought me back.

"From this day, the uncertain current of my life had got a fixed direction; my thoughts forever hastened back to the castle and the maiden; for here, it seemed to me, was the home of all my wishes. I forgot my customary pleasures, I forsook my playmates, and often visited the garden, the castle and Emma. Here I had, in a little time, grown, as it were, an inmate of the house, so that they no longer thought it strange to see me; and Emma was becoming dearer to me every day. Thus passed my hours; and a tenderness had taken my heart captive, though I myself was not aware of it. My whole destination seemed to me fulfilled; I had no wish but still to come again; and when I went away, to have the same prospect for the morrow.

"Matters were in this state when a young knight became acquainted in the family; he was a friend of my parents; and he soon, like me, attached himself to Emma. I hated him, from that moment, as my deadly enemy; but nothing can describe my feelings, when I fancied I perceived that Emma liked him more than me. From this hour, it was as if the music, which had hitherto accompanied me, went silent in my bosom. I meditated but on death and hatred; wild thoughts now awoke in my breast, when Emma sang her well-known songs to her lute. Nor did I hide the aversion which I felt; and when my parents tried to reason and remonstrate with me, I grew fierce and contradictory.

"I now roved about the woods and rocky wastes, infuriated against myself. The death of my rival was a thing I had determined on. The young knight, after some few months, made a formal offer of himself to the parents of my mistress, and she was betrothed to him. All that was rare and beautiful in Nature, all that had charmed me in her magnificence, had been united in my soul with Emma's image; I fancied, knew or wished for no other happiness but Emma; nay, I had wilfully determined that the day, which brought the loss of her, should also bring my own destruction.

"My parents sorrowed in heart at such perversion; my mother had fallen sick, but I paid no heed to this; her situation gave me little trouble, and I saw her seldom. The wedding-day of my enemy was coming on; and with its approach increased the agony of mind which drove me over woods and mountains. I execrated Emma and myself with the most horrid curses. At this time I had no friend; no man would take any charge of me, for all had given me up for lost.

"The fearful marriage-eve came on. I had wandered deep among the cliffs, I heard the rushing of the forest-streams below; I often shuddered at myself. When the morning came, I saw my enemy proceeding down the mountains: I assailed him with injurious speeches; he replied; we drew our swords, and he soon fell beneath my furious strokes.

"I hastened on, not looking after him, but his attendants took the corpse away. At night, I hovered round the dwelling which enclosed my Emma; and a few days afterwards, I heard in the neighbouring cloister the sound of the funeral-bell, and the grave-song of the nuns. I inquired; and was told that Fräulein Emma, out of sorrow for her bridegroom's death, was dead.

"I could stay no longer; I doubted whether I was living, whether it was all truth or not. I hastened back to my parents; and came next night, at a late hour, to the town where they lived. Here all was in confusion; horses and military wagons filled the streets, soldiers were jostling one another this way and that, and speaking in disordered haste: the Emperor was on the point of undertaking a campaign against his enemies. A solitary light was burning in my father's house when I entered; a strangling oppression lay upon my breast. As I knocked, my father himself, with slow, thoughtful steps, advanced to meet me; and immediately I recollected the old dream of my childhood; and felt, with cutting emotion, that now it was receiving its fulfilment. In perplexity, I asked: 'Why are you up so late,

Father?' He led me in, and said: 'I may well be up, for thy mother is even now dead.'

"His words struck through my soul like thunderbolts. He took a seat with a meditative air; I sat down beside him. The corpse was lying in a bed, and strangely wound in linen. My heart was like to burst. 'I wake here,' said the old man, 'for my wife is still sitting by me.' My senses failed; I fixed my eyes upon a corner; and, after a little while, there rose, as it were, a vapour; it mounted and wavered; and the well-known figure of my mother gathered itself visibly together from the midst of it, and looked at me with an earnest mien. I wished to go, but I could not; for the form of my mother beckoned to me, and my father held me in his arms, and whispered to me, in a low voice: 'She died of grief for thee.' I embraced him with a childlike transport of affection; I poured burning tears on his breast. He kissed me; and I shuddered; for his lips, as they touched me, were cold, like the lips of one dead. 'How art thou, Father?' cried I, in horror. He writhed painfully together, and made no reply. In a few moments, I felt him growing colder; I laid my hand on his heart, but it was still; and, in a wailing delirium, I held the body fast clasped in my embrace.

"As it were a gleam, like the first streak of dawn, went through the dark room; and behold, the spirit of my father sat beside my mother's form; and both looked at me compassionately, as I held the dear corpse in my arms. After this my consciousness was over: exhausted and delirious, the servants found me next morning in the chamber of the dead."

So far the Tannenhäuser had proceeded with his narrative: Friedrich was listening to him with the deepest astonishment, when all on a sudden he broke off, and paused with an expression of the keenest pain. Friedrich felt embarrassed and immersed in thought; they both returned in company to the Castle, but stayed in the same room apart from others.

The Tannenhäuser had kept silence for a while, then he again began: "The remembrance of those hours still agitates

me deeply; I understand not how I have survived them. The world, and its life, now appeared to me as if dead and utterly desolate; without thoughts or wishes I lived on from day to day. I then became acquainted with a set of wild young people; and endeavoured, in the whirl of pleasure and intoxication, to lay the tumultuous Evil Spirit that was in me. My ancient burning impatience again awoke; and I could no longer understand myself or my wishes. A debauchee, named Rudolf, had become my confidant; he, however, always laughed to scorn my longings and complaints. About a year had passed in this way, when my misery of spirit rose to desperation; there was something drove me onwards, onwards, into unknown space; I could have dashed myself down from the high mountains into the glowing green of the meadows, into the cool rushing of the waters, to slake the burning thirst, to stay the insatiability of my soul: I longed for annihilation; and again, like golden morning clouds, did hope and love of life arise before me, and entice me on. The thought then struck me, that Hell was hungering for me, and was sending me my sorrows as well as my pleasures to destroy me; that some malignant Spirit was directing all the powers of my soul to the Infernal Abode; and leading me, as with a bridle, to my doom. And I surrendered to him; that so these torments, these alternating raptures and agonies, might leave me. In the darkest night, I mounted a lofty hill; and called on the Enemy of God and man, with all the energies of my heart, so that I felt he would be forced to hear me. My words brought him: he stood suddenly before me, and I felt no horror. Then in talking with him, the belief in that strange Hill again rose within me; and he taught me a Song, which of itself would lead me by the straight road thither. He disappeared, and for the first time since I had begun to live, I was alone with myself; for I now understood my wandering thoughts, which rushed as from a centre to find out another world. I set forth on my journey; and the Song, which I sang with a

loud voice, led me over strange deserts; but all other things besides myself I had forgotten. There was something carrying me, as on the strong wings of desire, to my home: I wished to escape the shadow which, amid the sunshine, threatens us; the wild tones which, amid the softest music, chide us. So travelling on, I reached the Mountain, one night when the moon was shining faintly from behind dim clouds. I proceeded with my Song; and a giant form stood by me, and beckoned me back with his staff. I went nearer: 'I am the Trusty Eckart,' said the superhuman figure; 'by God's goodness, I am placed here as watchman, to warn men back from their sinful rashness.'—I pressed through.

"My path was now as in a subterraneous mine. The passage was so narrow, that I had to press myself along; I caught the gurgling of hidden waters; I heard spirits forming ore, and gold and silver, to entice the soul of man; I found here concealed and separate the deep sounds and tones from which earthly music springs: the farther I went, the more did there fall, as it were, a veil from my sight.

"I rested, and saw other forms of men come gliding towards me; my friend Rudolf was among the number. I could not understand how they were to pass me, so narrow was the way; but they went along, through the middle of the rock, without perceiving me.

"Anon I heard the sound of music; but music altogether different from any that had ever struck my ear before. My thoughts within me strove towards the notes: I came into an open space; and strange radiant colours glittered on me from every side. This it was that I had always been in search of. Close to my heart I felt the presence of the long-sought, now-discovered glory; and its ravishments thrilled into me with all their power. And then the whole crowd of jocund Pagan gods came forth to meet me, Lady Venus at their head, and all saluted me. They have been banished thither by the power of the Almighty; their worship is abolished from the Earth; and now they work upon us from their concealment.

"All pleasures that Earth affords I here possessed and partook of in their fullest bloom; insatiable was my heart, and endless my enjoyment. The famed Beauties of the ancient world were present; what my thought coveted was mine; one delirium of rapture was followed by another; and day after day, the world appeared to burn round me in more glorious hues. Streams of the richest wine allayed my fierce thirst; and beauteous forms sported in the air, and soft eyes invited me; vapours rose enchanting around my head: as if from the inmost heart of blissful Nature, came a music and cooled with its fresh waves the wild tumult of desire; and a horror, that glided faint and secret over the rose-fields, heightened the delicious revel. How many years passed over me in this abode I know not: for here there was no time and no distinctions; the flowers here glowed with the charms of women; and in the forms of the women bloomed the magic of flowers; colours here had another language; the whole world of sense was bound together into one blossom, and the spirits within it forever held their rejoicing.

"Now, how it happened, I can neither say nor comprehend; but so it was, that in all this pomp of sin, a love of rest, a longing for the old innocent Earth, with her scanty joys, took hold of me here, as keenly as of old the impulse which had driven me hither. I was again drawn on to live that life which men, in their unconsciousness, go on leading: I was sated with this splendour, and gladly sought my former home once more. An unspeakable grace of the Almighty permitted my return; I found myself suddenly again in the world; and now it is my intention to pour out my guilty breast before the chair of our Holy Father in Rome; that so he may forgive me, and I may again be reckoned among men."

The Tannenhäuser ceased; and Friedrich long viewed him with an investigating look, then took his hand, and said: "I cannot yet recover from my wonder, nor can I understand thy narrative; for it is impossible that all thou hast told me can

be aught but an imagination. Emma still lives, she is my wife; thou and I never quarrelled, or hated one another, as thou thinkest: yet before our marriage, thou wert gone on a sudden from the neighbourhood; nor didst thou ever tell me, by a single hint, that Emma was dear to thee."

Hereupon he took the bewildered Tannenhäuser by the hand, and led him into another room to his wife, who had just then returned from a visit to her sister, which had kept her for the last few days from home. The Tannenhäuser spoke not, and seemed immersed in thought; he viewed in silence the form and face of the lady, then shook his head, and said: "By Heaven, that is the strangest incident of all!"

Friedrich, with precision and connectedness, related all that had befallen him since that time; and tried to make his friend perceive that it had been some singular madness which had, in the mean while, harassed him. "I know very well how it stands," exclaimed the Tannenhäuser. "It is now that I am crazy; and Hell has cast this juggling show before me, that I may not go to Rome, and seek the pardon of my sins."

Emma tried to bring his childhood to his recollection; but the Tannenhäuser would not be persuaded. He speedily set out on his journey; that he might the sooner get his absolution from the Pope.

Friedrich and Emma often spoke of the mysterious pilgrim. Some months had gone by, when the Tannenhäuser, pale and wasted, in a tattered pilgrim's dress, and barefoot, one morning entered Friedrich's chamber, while the latter was in bed asleep. He kissed his lips, and then said, in breathless haste: "The Holy Father cannot, and will not, forgive me; I must back to my old dwelling." And with this he went hurriedly away.

Friedrich roused himself; but the ill-fated pilgrim was already gone. He went to his lady's room; and her maids rushed out to meet him, crying that the Tannenhäuser had pressed into the apartment early in the morning, with the

words: "She shall not obstruct me in my course!"—Emma was lying murdered.

Friedrich had not yet recalled his thoughts, when a horror came over him: he could not rest; he ran into the open air. They wished to keep him back; but he told them that the pilgrim had kissed his lips, and that the kiss was burning him till he found the man again. And so, with inconceivable rapidity, he ran away to seek the Tannenhäuser, and the mysterious Hill; and, since that day, he was never seen any more. People say, that whoever gets a kiss from any emissary of the Hill, is thenceforth unable to withstand the lure that draws him with magic force into the subterraneous chasm.

THE RUNENBERG

A YOUNG hunter was sitting in the heart of the Mountains, in a thoughtful mood, beside his fowling-floor, while the noise of the waters and the woods was sounding through the solitude. He was musing on his destiny; how he was so young, and had forsaken his father and mother, and accustomed home, and all his comrades in his native village, to seek out new acquaintances, to escape from the circle of returning habitude; and he looked up with a sort of surprise that he was here, that he found himself in this valley, in this employment. Great clouds were passing over him, and sinking behind the mountains; birds were singing from the bushes, and an echo was replying to them. He slowly descended the hill; and seated himself on the margin of a brook, that was gushing down among the rocks with foamy murmur. He listened to the fitful melody of the water; and it seemed to him as if the waves were saying to him, in unintelligible words, a thousand things that concerned him nearly; and he felt an inward trouble that he could not understand their speeches. Then again he looked aloft, and thought that he was glad and happy; so he took new heart, and sang aloud this hunting-song:

Blithe and cheery through the mountains
  Goes the huntsman to the chase,
By the lonesome shady fountains,
  Till he finds the red-deer's trace.

Hark! his trusty dogs are baying
  Through the bright-green solitude;
Through the groves the horns are playing:
  O, thou merry gay green wood!

In some dell, when luck hath blest him,
And his shot hath stretch'd the deer,
Lies he down, content, to rest him,
While the brooks are murmuring clear.

Leave the husbandman his sowing,
Let the shipman sail the sea;
None, when bright the morn is glowing,
Sees its red so fair as he,

Wood and wold and game that prizes,
While Diana loves his art;
And, at last, some bright face rises:
Happy huntsman that thou art!

Whilst he sung, the sun had sunk deeper, and broad shadows fell across the narrow glen. A cooling twilight glided over the ground; and now only the tops of the trees, and the round summits of the mountains, were gilded by the glow of evening. Christian's heart grew sadder and sadder: he could not think of going back to his birdfold, and yet he could not stay; he felt himself alone, and longed to meet with men. He now remembered with regret those old books, which he used to see at home, and would never read, often as his father had advised him to it: the habitation of his childhood came before him, his sports with the youth of the village, his acquaintances among the children, the school that had afflicted him so much; and he wished he were again amid these scenes, which he had wilfully forsaken, to seek his fortune in unknown regions, in the mountains, among strange people, in a new employment. Meanwhile it grew darker; and the brook rushed louder; and the birds of night began to shoot, with fitful wing, along their mazy courses. Christian still sat disconsolate, and immersed in sad reflection; he was like to weep, and altogether undecided what to do or purpose. Unthinkingly, he pulled a straggling root from the earth; and on the instant, heard, with affright, a stifled moan underground, which winded downwards in doleful tones, and died

plaintively away in the deep distance. The sound went through his inmost heart; it seized him as if he had unwittingly touched the wound of which the dying frame of Nature was expiring in its agony. He started up to fly, for he had already heard of the mysterious mandrake-root, which, when torn, yields such heart-rending moans, that the person who has hurt it runs distracted by its wailing. As he turned to go, a stranger man was standing at his back, who looked at him with a friendly countenance, and asked him whither he was going. Christian had been longing for society, and yet he started in alarm at this friendly presence.

"Whither so fast?" said the stranger again.

The young hunter made an effort to collect himself, and told how all at once the solitude had seemed so frightful to him, he had meant to get away; the evening was so dark, the green shades of the wood so dreary, the brook seemed uttering lamentations, and his longing drew him over to the other side of the hills.

"You are but young," said the stranger, "and cannot yet endure the rigour of solitude: I will accompany you, for you will find no house or hamlet within a league of this; and in the way we may talk, and tell each other tales, and so your sad thoughts will leave you: in an hour the moon will rise behind the hills; its light also will help to chase away the darkness of your mind."

They went along, and the stranger soon appeared to Christian as if he had been an old acquaintance. "Who are you?" said the man; "by your speech I hear that you belong not to this part."

"Ah!" replied the other, "upon this I could say much, and yet it is not worth the telling you, or talking of. There was something dragged me, with a foreign force, from the circle of my parents and relations; my spirit was not master of itself: like a bird which is taken in a net, and struggles to no purpose, so my soul was meshed in strange imaginations

and desires. We dwelt far hence, in a plain, where all round you could see no hill, scarce even a height: few trees adorned the green level; but meadows, fertile corn-fields, gardens stretched away as far as the eye could reach; and a broad river glittered like a potent spirit through the midst of them. My father was gardener to a nobleman, and meant to breed me to the same employment. He delighted in plants and flowers beyond aught else, and could unweariedly pass day by day in watching them and tending them. Nay, he went so far as to maintain, that he could almost speak with them; that he got knowledge from their growth and spreading, as well as from the varied form and colour of their leaves. To me, however, gardening was a tiresome occupation; and the more so as my father kept persuading me to take it up, or even attempted to compel me to it with threats. I wished to be a fisherman, and tried that business for a time; but a life on the waters would not suit me: I was then apprenticed to a tradesman in the town; but soon came home from this employment also. My father happened to be talking of the Mountains, which he had travelled over in his youth; of the subterranean mines and their workmen; of hunters and their occupation; and that instant there arose in me the most decided wish, the feeling that at last I had found out the way of life which would entirely fit me. Day and night I meditated on the matter; representing to myself high mountains, chasms and pine-forests; my imagination shaped wild rocks; I heard the tumult of the chase, the horns, the cry of the hounds and the game; all my dreams were filled with these things, and they left me neither peace nor rest any more. The plain, our patron's castle, and my father's little hampered garden, with its trimmed flower-beds; our narrow dwelling; the wide sky which stretched above us in its dreary vastness, embracing no hill, no lofty mountain, all became more dull and odious to me. It seemed as if the people about me were living in most lamentable ignorance; that every one of them would think and long as I did, should the

feeling of their wretchedness but once arise within their souls. Thus did I bait my heart with restless fancies; till one morning I resolved on leaving my father's house directly and forever. In a book I had found some notice of the nearest mountains, some charts of the neighbouring districts, and by them I shaped my course. It was early in spring, and I felt myself cheerful, and altogether light of heart. I hastened on, to get away the faster from the level country; and one evening, in the distance, I descried the dim outline of the Mountains, lying on the sky before me. I could scarcely sleep in my inn, so impatient did I feel to have my foot upon the region which I regarded as my home: with the earliest dawn I was awake, and again in motion. By the afternoon, I had got among my beloved hills; and here, as if intoxicated, I went on, then stopped a while, looked back; and drank, as in inspiring draughts, the aspect of these foreign yet well-known objects. Ere long, the plain was out of sight: the forest-streams were rushing down to meet me; the oaks and beeches sounded to me from their steep precipices with wavering boughs; my path led me by the edge of dizzy abysses; blue hills were standing vast and solemn in the distance. A new world was opened to me; I was never weary. Thus, after some days, having roamed over great part of the Mountains, I reached the dwelling of an old forester, who consented, at my urgent request, to take me in, and instruct me in the business of the chase. It is now three months since I entered his service. I took possession of the district where I was to live, as of my kingdom. I got acquainted with every cliff and dell among the mountains; in my occupation, when at dawn of day we moved to the forest, when felling trees in the wood, when practising my fowling-piece, or training my trusty attendants, our dogs, to do their feats, I felt completely happy. But for the last eight days I have stayed up here at the fowling-floor, in the loneliest quarter of the hills; and tonight I grew so sad as I never was in my life before; I seemed so lost,

so utterly unhappy; and even yet I cannot shake aside that melancholy humour."

The stranger had listened with attention, while they both wandered on through a dark alley of the wood. They now came out into the open country, and the light of the moon, which was standing with its horns over the summit of the hill, saluted them like a friend. In undistinguishable forms, and many separated masses, which the pale gleam again perplexingly combined, lay the cleft mountain-range before them; in the background a steep hill, on the top of which an antique weathered ruin rose ghastly in the white light. "Our roads part here," said the stranger; "I am going down into this hollow; there, by that old mine-shaft, is my dwelling: the metal ores are my neighbours; the mine-streams tell me wonders in the night; thither thou canst not follow me. But look, there stands the Runenberg, with its wild ragged walls; how beautiful and alluring the grim old rock looks down on us! Wert thou never there?"

"Never," said the hunter. "Once I heard my old forester relating strange stories of that hill, which I, like a fool, have forgotten; only I remember that my mind that night was full of dread and unearthly notions. I could like to mount the hill some time; for the colours there are of the fairest, the grass must be very green, the world around one very strange; who knows, too, but one might chance to find some curious relic of the ancient time up there?"

"You could scarcely fail," replied the stranger; "whoever knows how to seek, whoever feels his heart drawn towards it with a right inward longing, will find friends of former ages there, and glorious things, and all that he wishes most." With these words the stranger rapidly descended to a side, without bidding his companion farewell; he soon vanished in the tangles of the thicket, and after some few instants, the sound of his footsteps also died away. The young hunter did not feel surprised, he but went on with quicker speed towards the Runenberg: thither all things seemed to beckon

him; the stars were shining towards it; the moon pointed out as it were a bright road to the ruins; light clouds rose up to them; and from the depths, the waters and sounding woods spoke new courage into him. His steps were as if winged; his heart throbbed; he felt so great a joy within him, that it rose to pain. He came into places he had never seen before: the rocks grew steeper; the green disappeared; the bald cliffs called to him, as with angry voices, and a low moaning wind drove him on before it. Thus he hurried forward without pause; and late after midnight he came upon a narrow footpath, which ran along by the brink of an abyss. He heeded not the depth which yawned beneath, and threatened to swallow him forever; so keenly was he driven along by wild imaginations and vague wishes. At last his perilous track led him close by a high wall, which seemed to lose itself in the clouds; the path grew narrower every step; and Christian had to cling by projecting stones to keep himself from rushing down into the gulf. Ere long, he could get no farther; his path ended underneath a window: he was obliged to pause, and knew not whether he should turn or stay. Suddenly he saw a light, which seemed to move within the ruined edifice. He looked towards the gleam; and found that he could see into an ancient spacious hall, strangely decorated, and glittering in manifold splendour, with multitudes of precious stones and crystals, the hues of which played through each other in mysterious changes, as the light moved to and fro; and this was in the hand of a stately female, who kept walking with a thoughtful aspect up and down the apartment. She seemed of a different race from mortals; so large, so strong was her form, so earnest her look; yet the enraptured huntsman thought he had never seen or fancied such surpassing beauty. He trembled, yet secretly wished she might come near the window and observe him. At last she stopped, set down the light on a crystal table, looked aloft, and sang with a piercing voice:

What can the Ancient keep
That they come not at my call?
The crystal pillars weep,
From the diamonds on the wall
The trickling tear-drops fall ;
And within is heard a moan,
A chiding fitful tone :
In these waves of brightness,
Lovely changeful lightness,
Has the Shape been form'd,
By which the soul is charm'd,
And the longing heart is warm'd?
Come, ye Spirits, at my call,
Haste ye to the Golden Hall ;
Raise, from your abysses gloomy,
Heads that sparkle ; faster
Come, ye Ancient Ones, come to me !
Let your power be master
Of the longing hearts and souls,
Where the flood of passion rolls,
Let your power be master !

On finishing the song, she began undressing ; laying her apparel in a costly press. First, she took a golden veil from her head ; and her long black hair streamed down in curling fulness over her loins : then she loosed her bosom-dress ; and the youth forgot himself and all the world in gazing at that more than earthly beauty. He scarcely dared to breathe, as by degrees she laid aside her other garments : at last she walked about the chamber naked ; and her heavy waving locks formed round her, as it were, a dark billowy sea, out of which, like marble, the glancing limbs of her form beamed forth, in alternating splendour. After a while, she went forward to another golden press ; and took from it a tablet, glittering with many inlaid stones, rubies, diamonds and all kinds of jewels ; and viewed it long with an investigating look. The tablet seemed to form a strange inexplicable figure, from its individual lines and colours ; sometimes, when the glance of it came towards the hunter, he was painfully dazzled by it ; then, again, soft green and blue playing over

it, refreshed his eye: he stood, however, devouring the objects with his looks, and at the same time sunk in deep thought. Within his soul, an abyss of forms and harmony, of longing and voluptuousness, was opened: hosts of winged tones, and sad and joyful melodies flew through his spirit, which was moved to its foundations: he saw a world of Pain and Hope arise within him; strong towering crags of Trust and defiant Confidence, and deep rivers of Sadness flowing by. He no longer knew himself: and he started as the fair woman opened the window; handed him the magic tablet of stones, and spoke these words: "Take this in memory of me!" He caught the tablet; and felt the figure, which, unseen, at once went through his inmost heart; and the light, and the fair woman, and the wondrous hall, had disappeared. As it were, a dark night, with curtains of cloud, fell down over his soul: he searched for his former feelings, for that inspiration and unutterable love; he looked at the precious tablet, and the sinking moon was imaged in it faint and bluish.

He had still the tablet firmly grasped in his hands when the morning dawned; and he, exhausted, giddy and half-asleep, fell headlong down the precipice.—

The sun shone bright on the face of the stupefied sleeper; and, awakening, he found himself upon a pleasant hill. He looked round, and saw far behind him, and scarce discernible at the extreme horizon, the ruins of the Runenberg; he searched for his tablet, and could find it nowhere. Astonished and perplexed, he tried to gather his thoughts, and connect together his remembrances; but his memory was as if filled with a waste haze, in which vague irrecognisable shapes were wildly jostling to and fro. His whole previous life lay behind him, as in a far distance; the strangest and the commonest were so mingled, that all his efforts could not separate them. After long struggling with himself, he at last concluded that a dream, or sudden madness, had come over him that night; only he could never understand how he had strayed so far into a strange and remote quarter.

Still scarcely waking, he went down the hill; and came upon a beaten way, which led him out from the mountains into the plain country. All was strange to him: he at first thought that he would find his old home; but the country which he saw was quite unknown to him; and at length he concluded that he must be upon the south side of the Mountains, which, in spring, he had entered from the north. Towards noon, he perceived a little town below him: from its cottages a peaceful smoke was mounting up; children, dressed as for a holiday, were sporting on the green; and from a small church came the sound of the organ, and the singing of the congregation. All this laid hold of him with a sweet, inexpressible sadness; it so moved him, that he was forced to weep. The narrow gardens, the little huts with their smoking chimneys, the accurately-parted corn-fields, reminded him of the necessities of poor human nature; of man's dependence on the friendly Earth, to whose benignity he must commit himself; while the singing, and the music of the organ, filled the stranger's heart with a devoutness it had never felt before. The desires and emotions of the bygone night seemed reckless and wicked; he wished once more, in childlike meekness, helplessly and humbly to unite himself to men as to his brethren, and fly from his ungodly purposes and feelings. The plain, with its little river, which, in manifold windings, clasped itself about the gardens and meadows, seemed to him inviting and delightful: he thought with fear of his abode among the lonely mountains, amid waste rocks; he wished that he could be allowed to live in this peaceful village; and so feeling, he went into its crowded church.

The psalm was just over, and the preacher had begun his sermon. It was on the kindness of God in regard to Harvest; how His goodness feeds and satisfies all things that live; how marvellously He has, in the fruits of the Earth, provided support for men; how the love of God incessantly displays itself in the bread He sends us; and how the humble Christian may therefore, with a thankful spirit, perpetually celebrate a

Holy Supper. The congregation were affected; the eyes of the hunter rested on the pious priest, and observed, close by the pulpit, a young maiden, who appeared beyond all others reverent and attentive. She was slim and fair; her blue eye gleamed with the most piercing softness; her face was as if transparent, and blooming in the tenderest colours. The stranger youth had never been as he now was; so full of charity, so calm, so abandoned to the stillest, most refreshing feelings. He bowed himself in tears, when the clergyman pronounced his blessing; he felt these holy words thrill through him like an unseen power; and the vision of the night drew back before them to the deepest distance, as a spectre at the dawn. He issued from the church; stopped beneath a large lime-tree; and thanked God, in a heartfelt prayer, that He had saved him, sinful and undeserving, from the nets of the Wicked Spirit.

The people were engaged in holding harvest-home that day, and every one was in a cheerful mood; the children, with their gay dresses, were rejoicing in the prospect of the sweetmeats and the dance; in the village square, a space encircled with young trees, the youths were arranging the preparations for their harvest sport; the players were seated, and essaying their instruments. Christian went into the fields again, to collect his thoughts and pursue his meditations; and on his returning to the village, all had joined in mirth, and actual celebration of their festival. The fair-haired Elizabeth was there, too, with her parents; and the stranger mingled in the jocund throng. Elizabeth was dancing; and Christian, in the mean time, had entered into conversation with her father, a farmer, and one of the richest people in the village. The man seemed pleased with his youth and way of speech; so, in a short time, both of them agreed that Christian should remain with him as gardener. This office Christian could engage with; for he hoped that now the knowledge and employments, which he had so much despised at home, would stand him in good stead.

From this period a new life began for him. He went to live with the farmer, and was numbered among his family. With his trade, he likewise changed his garb. He was so good, so helpful and kindly; he stood to his task so honestly, that ere long every member of the house, especially the daughter, had a friendly feeling to him. Every Sunday, when he saw her going to church, he was standing with a fair nosegay ready for Elizabeth; and then she used to thank him with blushing kindliness: he felt her absence, on days when he did not chance to see her; and at night, she would tell him tales and pleasant histories. Day by day they grew more necessary to each other; and the parents, who observed it, did not seem to think it wrong; for Christian was the most industrious and handsomest youth in the village. They themselves had, at first sight, felt a touch of love and friendship for him. After half a year, Elizabeth became his wife. Spring was come back; the swallows and the singing-birds had revisited the land; the garden was standing in its fairest trim; the marriage was celebrated with abundant mirth; bride and bridegroom seemed intoxicated with their happiness. Late at night, when they retired to their chamber, the husband whispered to his wife: "No, thou art not that form which once charmed me in a dream, and which I never can entirely forget; but I am happy beside thee, and blessed that thou art mine."

How delighted was the family, when, within a year, it became augmented by a little daughter, who was baptized Leonora. Christian's looks, indeed, would sometimes take a rather grave expression as he gazed on the child; but his youthful cheeriness continually returned. He scarcely ever thought of his former way of life, for he felt himself entirely domesticated and contented. Yet, some months afterwards, his parents came into his mind; and he thought how much his father, in particular, would be rejoiced to see his peaceful happiness, his station as husbandman and gardener; it grieved him that he should have utterly forgotten his father and

mother for so long a time; his own only child made known to him the joy which children afford to parents; so at last he took the resolution to set out, and again revisit home.

Unwillingly he left his wife; all wished him speed; and the season being fine, he went off on foot. Already at the distance of a few miles, he felt how much the parting grieved him; for the first time in his life, he experienced the pains of separation; the foreign objects seemed to him almost savage; he felt as if he had been lost in some unfriendly solitude. Then the thought came on him, that his youth was over; that he had found a home to which he now belonged, in which his heart had taken root; he was almost ready to lament the lost levity of younger years; and his mind was in the saddest mood, when he turned aside into a village inn to pass the night. He could not understand how he had come to leave his kind wife, and the parents she had given him; and he felt dispirited and discontented, when he rose next morning to pursue his journey.

His pain increased as he approached the hills: the distant ruins were already visible, and by degrees grew more distinguishable; many summits rose defined and clear amid the blue vapour. His step grew timid; frequently he paused, astonished at his fear; at the horror which, with every step, fell closer on him. "Madness!" cried he, "I know thee well, and thy perilous seductions; but I will withstand thee manfully. Elizabeth is no vain dream; I know that even now she thinks of me, that she waits for me, and fondly counts the hours of my absence. Do I not already see forests like black hair before me? Do not the glancing eyes look to me from the brook? Does not the stately form step towards me from the mountains?" So saying, he was about to lay himself beneath a tree, and take some rest; when he perceived an old man seated in the shade of it, examining a flower with extreme attention; now holding it to the sun, now shading it with his hands, now counting its leaves; as if striving in every way to stamp it accurately in his memory.

On approaching nearer, he thought he knew the form; and soon no doubt remained that the old man with the flower was his father. With an exclamation of the liveliest joy, he rushed into his arms; the old man seemed delighted, but not much surprised, at meeting him so suddenly.

"Art thou with me already, my son?" said he: "I knew that I should find thee soon, but I did not think such joy had been in store for me this very day."

"How did you know, father, that you would meet me?"

"By this flower," replied the old gardener; "all my days I have had a wish to see it; but never had I the fortune; for it is very scarce, and grows only among the mountains. I set out to seek thee, for thy mother is dead, and the loneliness at home made me sad and heavy. I knew not whither I should turn my steps; at last I came among the mountains, dreary as the journey through them had appeared to me. By the road, I sought for this flower, but could find it nowhere; and now, quite unexpectedly, I see it here, where the fair plain is lying stretched before me. From this I knew that I should meet thee soon; and, lo, how true the fair flower's prophecy has proved!"

They embraced again, and Christian wept for his mother; but the old man grasped his hand, and said: "Let us go, that the shadows of the mountains may be soon out of view; it always makes me sorrowful in the heart to see these wild steep shapes, these horrid chasms, these torrents gurgling down into their caverns. Let us get upon the good, kind, guileless level ground again."

They went back, and Christian recovered his cheerfulness. He told his father of his new fortune, of his child and home: his speech made himself as if intoxicated; and he now, in talking of it, for the first time truly felt that nothing more was wanting to his happiness. Thus, amid narrations sad and cheerful, they returned into the village. All were delighted at the speedy ending of the journey; most of all, Elizabeth. The old father stayed with them, and joined his

little fortune to their stock; they formed the most contented and united circle in the world. Their crops were good, their cattle throve; and in a few years Christian's house was among the wealthiest in the quarter. Elizabeth had also given him several other children.

Five years had passed away in this manner, when a stranger halted from his journey in their village; and took up his lodging in Christian's house, as being the most respectable the place contained. He was a friendly, talking man; he told them many stories of his travels; sported with the children, and made presents to them: in a short time, all were growing fond of him. He liked the neighbourhood so well, that he proposed remaining in it for a day or two; but the days grew weeks, and the weeks months. No one seemed to wonder at his loitering; for all of them had grown accustomed to regard him as a member of the family. Christian alone would often sit in a thoughtful mood; for it seemed to him as if he knew this traveller of old, and yet he could not think of any time when he had met with him. Three months had passed away, when the stranger at last took his leave, and said: "My dear friends, a wondrous destiny, and singular anticipations, drive me to the neighbouring mountains; a magic image, not to be withstood, allures me: I leave you now, and I know not whether I shall ever see you any more. I have a sum of money by me, which in your hands will be safer than in mine; so I ask you to take charge of it; and if within a year I come not back, then keep it, and accept my thanks along with it for the kindness you have shown me."

So the traveller went his way, and Christian took the money in charge. He locked it carefully up; and now and then, in the excess of his anxiety, looked over it; he counted it to see that none was missing, and in all respects took no little pains with it. "This sum might make us very happy," said he once to his father; "should the stranger not return, both we and our children were well provided for."

"Heed not the gold," said the old man; "not in it can happiness be found: hitherto, thank God, we have never wanted aught; and do thou put away such thoughts far from thee."

Christian often rose in the night to set his servants to their labour, and look after everything himself: his father was afraid lest this excessive diligence might harm his youth and health; so one night he rose to speak with him about remitting such unreasonable efforts; when, to his astonishment, he found him sitting with a little lamp at his table, and counting, with the greatest eagerness, the stranger's gold. "My son," said the old man, full of sadness, "must it come to this with thee? Was this accursed metal brought beneath our roof to make us wretched? Bethink thee, my son, or the Evil One will consume thy blood and life out of thee."

"Yes," replied he; "it is true, I know myself no more; neither day nor night does it give me any rest: see how it looks on me even now, till the red glance of it goes into my very heart! Hark how it clinks, this golden stuff! It calls me when I sleep; I hear it when music sounds, when the wind blows, when people speak together on the street; if the sun shines, I see nothing but these yellow eyes, with which it beckons to me, as it were, to whisper words of love into my ear: and therefore I am forced to rise in the night-time, though it were but to satisfy its eagerness; and then I feel it triumphing and inwardly rejoicing when I touch it with my fingers; in its joy it grows still redder and lordlier. Do but look yourself at the glow of its rapture!" The old man, shuddering and weeping, took his son in his arms; he said a prayer, and then spoke: "Christel, thou must turn again to the Word of God; thou must go more zealously and reverently to church, or else, alas! my poor child, thou wilt droop and die away in the most mournful wretchedness."

The money was again locked up; Christian promised to take thought and change his conduct, and the old man was

composed. A year and more had passed, and no tidings had been heard of the stranger: the old man at last gave in to the entreaties of his son; and the money was laid out in land, and other property. The young farmer's riches soon became the talk of the village; and Christian seemed contented and comfortable, and his father felt delighted at beholding him so well and cheerful; all fear had now vanished from his mind. What then must have been his consternation, when Elizabeth one evening took him aside; and told him, with tears, that she could no longer understand her husband; how he spoke so wildly, especially at night; how he dreamed strange dreams, and would often in his sleep walk long about the room, not knowing it; how he spoke strange things to her, at which she often shuddered. But what terrified her most, she said, was his pleasantry by day; for his laugh was wild and hollow, his look wandering and strange. The father stood amazed, and the sorrowing wife proceeded: "He is always talking of the traveller, and maintaining that he knew him formerly, and that the stranger man was in truth a woman of unearthly beauty; nor will he go any more into the fields or the garden to work, for he says he hears underneath the ground a fearful moaning when he but pulls out a root; he starts and seems to feel a horror at all plants and herbs."

"Good God!" exclaimed the father, "is the frightful hunger in him grown so rooted and strong, that it is come to this? Then is his spell-bound heart no longer human, but of cold metal; he who does not love a flower, has lost all love and fear of God."

Next day the old man went to walk with his son, and told him much of what Elizabeth had said; calling on him to be pious, and devote his soul to holy contemplations. "Willingly, my father," answered Christian; "and I often do so with success, and all is well with me: for long periods of time, for years, I can forget the true form of my inward man, and lead a life that is foreign to me, as it were, with cheer-

fulness: but then on a sudden, like a new moon, the ruling star, which I myself am, arises again in my heart, and conquers this other influence. I might be altogether happy; but once, in a mysterious night, a secret sign was imprinted through my hand deep on my soul; frequently the magic figure sleeps and is at rest; I imagine it has passed away; but in a moment, like a poison, it darts up and lives over all its lineaments. And then I can think or feel nothing else but it; and all around me is transformed, or rather swallowed up, by this subduing shape. As the rabid man recoils at the sight of water, and the poison in him grows more fell; so too it is with me at the sight of any cornered figure, any line, any gleam of brightness; anything will then rouse the form that dwells in me, and make it start into being; and my soul and body feel the throes of birth; for as my mind received it by a feeling from without, she strives in agony and bitter labour to work it forth again into an outward feeling, that she may be rid of it, and at rest."

"It was an evil star that took thee from us to the Mountains," said the old man; "thou wert born for calm life, thy mind inclined to peace and the love of plants; then thy impatience hurried thee away to the company of savage stones: the crags, the torn cliffs, with their jagged shapes, have overturned thy soul, and planted in thee the wasting hunger for metals. Thou shouldst still have been on thy guard, and kept thyself away from the view of mountains; so I meant to bring thee up, but it has not so been to be. Thy humility, thy peace, thy childlike feeling, have been thrust away by scorn, boisterousness, and caprice."

"No," said the son; "I remember well that it was a plant which first made known to me the misery of the Earth; never, till then, did I understand the sighs and lamentations one may hear on every side, throughout the whole of Nature, if one but give ear to them. In plants and herbs, in trees and flowers, it is the painful writhing of one universal wound that moves and works; they are the corpse of foregone

glorious worlds of rock, they offer to our eye a horrid universe of putrefaction. I now see clearly it was this, which the root with its deep-drawn sigh was saying to me; in its sorrow it forgot itself, and told me all. It is because of this that all green shrubs are so enraged at me, and lie in wait for my life; they wish to obliterate that lovely figure in my heart; and every spring, with their distorted deathlike looks, they try to win my soul. Truly it is piteous to consider how they have betrayed and cozened thee, old man; for they have gained complete possession of thy spirit. Do but question the rocks, and thou wilt be amazed when thou shalt hear them speak."

The father looked at him a long while, and could answer nothing. They went home again in silence, and the old man was as frightened as Elizabeth at Christian's mirth; for it seemed a thing quite foreign; and as if another being from within were working out of him, awkwardly and ineffectually, as out of some machine.

The harvest-home was once more to be held; the people went to church, and Elizabeth, with her little ones, set out to join the service; her husband also seemed intending to accompany them, but at the threshold of the church he turned aside; and with an air of deep thought, walked out of the village. He set himself on the height, and again looked over upon the smoking cottages; he heard the music of the psalm and organ coming from the little church; children, in holiday dresses, were dancing and sporting on the green. "How have I lost my life as in a dream!" said he to himself: "years have passed away since I went down this hill to the merry children; they who were then sportful on the green, are now serious in the church; I also once went into it, but Elizabeth is now no more a blooming childlike maiden; her youth is gone; I cannot seek for the glance of her eyes with the longing of those days; I have wilfully neglected a high eternal happiness, to win one which is finite and transitory."

With a heart full of wild desire, he walked to the neighbouring wood, and immersed himself in its thickest shades. A ghastly silence encompassed him; no breath of air was stirring in the leaves. Meanwhile he saw a man approaching him from a distance, whom he recognised for the stranger; he started in affright, and his first thought was, that the man would ask him for his money. But as the form came nearer, he perceived how greatly he had been mistaken; for the features, which he had imagined known to him, melted into one another; an old woman of the utmost hideousness approached; she was clad in dirty rags; a tattered clout bound up her few grey hairs; she was limping on a crutch. With a dreadful voice she spoke to him, and asked his name and situation; he replied to both inquiries, and then said, "But who art thou?"

"I am called the Woodwoman," answered she; "and every child can tell of me. Didst thou never see me before?" With the last words she whirled about, and Christian thought he recognised among the trees the golden veil, the lofty gait, the large stately form which he had once beheld of old. He turned to hasten after her, but nowhere was she to be seen.

Meanwhile something glittered in the grass, and drew his eye to it. He picked it up; it was the magic tablet with the coloured jewels, and the wondrous figure, which he had lost so many years before. The shape and the changeful gleams struck over all his senses with an instantaneous power. He grasped it firmly, to convince himself that it was really once more in his hands, and then hastened back with it to the village. His father met him. "See," cried Christian, "the thing which I was telling you about so often, which I thought must have been shown to me only in a dream, is now sure and true."

The old man looked a long while at the tablet, and then said: "My son, I am struck with horror in my heart when I view these stones, and dimly guess the meaning of the words on them. Look here, how cold they glitter, what cruel looks

they cast from them, bloodthirsty, like the red eye of the tiger! Cast this writing from thee, which makes thee cold and cruel, which will turn thy heart to stone:

See the flowers, when moon is beaming,
Waken in their dewy place;
And, like children roused from dreaming,
Smiling look thee in the face.

By degrees, that way and this,
To the golden Sun they 're turning,
Till they meet his glowing kiss,
And their hearts with love are burning:

For, with fond and sad desire,
In their lover's looks to languish,
On his melting kisses to expire,
And to die of love's sweet anguish:

This is what they joy in most;
To depart in fondest weakness;
In their lover's being lost,
Faded stand in silent meekness.

Then they pour away the treasure
Of their perfumes, their soft souls,
And the air grows drunk with pleasure,
As in wanton floods it rolls.

Love comes to us here below,
Discord harsh away removing;
And the heart cries: Now I know
Sadness, Fondness, Pain of Loving."

"What wonderful incalculable treasures," said the other, "must there still be in the depths of the Earth! Could one but sound into their secret beds and raise them up, and snatch them to one's-self! Could one but clasp this Earth like a beloved bride to one's bosom, so that in pain and love she would willingly grant one her costliest riches! The Woodwoman has called me; I go to seek for her. Near by is an old ruined shaft, which some miner has hollowed out many centuries ago; perhaps I shall find her there!"

He hastened off. In vain did the old man strive to detain

him; in a few moments Christian had vanished from his sight. Some hours afterwards, the father, with a strong effort, reached the ruined shaft: he saw footprints in the sand at the entrance, and returned in tears; persuaded that his son, in a state of madness, had gone in and been drowned in the old collected waters and horrid caves of the mine.

From that day his heart seemed broken, and he was incessantly in tears. The whole neighbourhood deplored the fortune of the young farmer. Elizabeth was inconsolable, the children lamented aloud. In half a year the aged gardener died; the parents of Elizabeth soon followed him; and she was forced herself to take charge of everything. Her multiplied engagements helped a little to withdraw her from her sorrow; the education of her children, and the management of so much property, left little time for mourning. After two years, she determined on a new marriage; she bestowed her hand on a young light-hearted man, who had loved her from his youth. But, ere long, everything in their establishment assumed another form. The cattle died; men and maid servants proved dishonest; barns full of grain were burnt; people in the town who owed them sums of money, fled and made no payment. In a little while, the landlord found himself obliged to sell some fields and meadows; but a mildew, and a year of scarcity, brought new embarrassments. It seemed as if the gold, so strangely acquired, were taking speedy flight in all directions. Meanwhile the family was on the increase; and Elizabeth, as well as her husband, grew reckless and sluggish in this scene of despair: he fled for consolation to the bottle, he was often drunk, and therefore quarrelsome and sullen; so that frequently Elizabeth bewailed her state with bitter tears. As their fortune declined, their friends in the village stood aloof from them more and more; so that after some few years they saw themselves entirely forsaken, and were forced to struggle on, in penury and straits, from week to week.

They had nothing but a cow and a few sheep left them;

these Elizabeth herself, with her children, often tended at their grass. She was sitting one day with her work in the field, Leonora at her side, and a sucking child on her breast, when they saw from afar a strange-looking shape approaching towards them. It was a man with a garment all in tatters, bare-foot, sunburnt to a black-brown colour in the face, deformed still farther by a long matted beard . he wore no covering on his head; but had twisted a garland of green branches through his hair, which made his wild appearance still more strange and haggard. On his back he bore some heavy burden in a sack, very carefully tied, and as he walked he leaned upon a young fir.

On coming nearer, he put down his load, and drew deep draughts of breath. He bade Elizabeth good-day; she shuddered at the sight of him, the girl crouched close to her mother. Having rested for a little while, he said: "I am getting back from a very hard journey among the wildest mountains of the Earth; but to pay me for it, I have brought along with me the richest treasures which imagination can conceive, or heart desire. Look here, and wonder!" Thereupon he loosed his sack, and shook it empty: it was full of gravel, among which were to be seen large bits of chuck-stone, and other pebbles. "These jewels," he continued, "are not ground and polished yet, so they want the glance and the eye; the outward fire, with its glitter, is too deeply buried in their inmost heart; yet you have but to strike it out and frighten them, and show that no deceit will serve, and then you see what sort of stuff they are." So saying, he took a piece of flinty stone, and struck it hard against another, till they gave red sparks between them. "Did you see the glance?" cried he. "Ay, they are all fire and light; they illuminate the darkness with their laugh, though as yet it is against their will." With this he carefully repacked his pebbles in the bag, and tied it hard and fast. "I know thee very well," said he then, with a saddened tone; "thou art Elizabeth." The woman started.

"How comest thou to know my name?" cried she, with a forecasting shudder.

"Ah, good God!" said the unhappy creature, "I am Christian, he that was a hunter: dost thou not know me, then?"

She knew not, in her horror and deepest compassion, what to say. He fell upon her neck and kissed her. Elizabeth exclaimed: "O Heaven! my husband is coming!"

"Be at thy ease," said he; "I am as good as dead to thee: in the forest, there, my fair one waits for me; she that is tall and stately, with the black hair and the golden veil. This is my dearest child, Leonora. Come hither, darling: come, my pretty child; and give me a kiss, too; one kiss, that I may feel thy mouth upon my lips once again, and then I leave you."

Leonora wept; she clasped close to her mother, who, in sobs and tears, half held her toward the wanderer, while he half drew her towards him, took her in his arms, and pressed her to his breast. Then he went away in silence, and in the wood they saw him speaking with the hideous Woodwoman.

"What ails you?" said the husband, as he found mother and daughter pale and melting in tears. Neither of them answered.

The ill-fated creature was never seen again from that day.

THE ELVES

"WHERE is our little Mary?" said the father.

"She is playing out upon the green there with our neighbour's boy," replied the mother.

"I wish they may not run away and lose themselves," said he; "they are so thoughtless."

The mother looked for the little ones, and brought them their evening luncheon. "It is warm," said the boy; "and Mary had a longing for the red cherries."

"Have a care, children," said the mother, "and do not run too far from home, and not into the wood; Father and I are going to the fields."

Little Andres answered: "Never fear, the wood frightens us; we shall sit here by the house, where there are people near us."

The mother went in, and soon came out again with her husband. They locked the door, and turned towards the fields to look after their labourers, and see their hay-harvest in the meadow. Their house lay upon a little green height, encircled by a pretty ring of paling, which likewise enclosed their fruit and flower garden. The hamlet stretched somewhat deeper down, and on the other side lay the castle of the Count. Martin rented the large farm from this nobleman; and was living in contentment with his wife and only child; for he yearly saved some money, and had the prospect of becoming a man of substance by his industry, for the ground was productive, and the Count not illiberal.

As he walked with his wife to the fields, he gazed cheer-

fully round and said: "What a different look this quarter has, Brigitta, from the place we lived in formerly! Here it is all so green; the whole village is bedecked with thick-spreading fruit-trees; the ground is full of beautiful herbs and flowers; all the houses are cheerful and cleanly, the inhabitants are at their ease: nay, I could almost fancy that the woods are greener here than elsewhere, and the sky bluer; and, so far as the eye can reach, you have pleasure and delight in beholding the bountiful Earth."

"And whenever you cross the stream," said Brigitta, "you are, as it were, in another world, all is so dreary and withered; but every traveller declares that our village is the fairest in the country far and near."

"All but that fir-ground," said her husband; "do but look back to it, how dark and dismal that solitary spot is lying in the gay scene: the dingy fir-trees with the smoky huts behind them, the ruined stalls, the brook flowing past with a sluggish melancholy."

"It is true," replied Brigitta; "if you but approach that spot, you grow disconsolate and sad, you know not why. What sort of people can they be that live there, and keep themselves so separate from the rest of us, as if they had an evil conscience?"

"A miserable crew," replied the young Farmer: "gipsies, seemingly, that steal and cheat in other quarters, and have their hoard and hiding-place here. I wonder only that his Lordship suffers them."

"Who knows," said the wife, with an accent of pity, "but perhaps they may be poor people, wishing, out of shame, to conceal their poverty; for, after all, no one can say aught ill of them; the only thing is, that they do not go to church, and none knows how they live; for the little garden, which indeed seems altogether waste, cannot possibly support them; and fields they have none."

"God knows," said Martin, as they went along, "what trade they follow; no mortal comes to them; for the place

they live in is as if bewitched and excommunicated, so that even our wildest fellows will not venture into it."

Such conversation they pursued, while walking to the fields. That gloomy spot they spoke of lay aside from the hamlet. In a dell, begirt with firs, you might behold a hut, and various ruined office-houses; rarely was smoke seen to mount from it, still more rarely did men appear there; though at times curious people, venturing somewhat nearer, had perceived upon the bench before the hut, some hideous women, in ragged clothes, dandling in their arms some children equally dirty and ill-favoured; black dogs were running up and down upon the boundary; and, of an evening, a man of monstrous size was seen to cross the footbridge of the brook, and disappear in the hut; and, in the darkness, various shapes were observed, moving like shadows round a fire in the open air. This piece of ground, the firs and the ruined huts, formed in truth a strange contrast with the bright green landscape, the white houses of the hamlet, and the stately new-built castle.

The two little ones had now eaten their fruit; it came into their heads to run races; and the little nimble Mary always got the start of the less active Andres. "It is not fair," cried Andres at last: "let us try it for some length, then we shall see who wins."

"As thou wilt," said Mary; "only to the brook we must not run."

"No," said Andres; "but there, on the hill, stands the large pear-tree, a quarter of a mile from this. I shall run by the left, round past the fir-ground; thou canst try it by the right over the fields; so we do not meet till we get up, and then we shall see which of us is swifter."

"Done," cried Mary, and began to run; "for we shall not mar one another by the way, and my father says it is as far to the hill by that side of the Gipsies' house as by this."

Andres had already started, and Mary, turning to the right, could no longer see him. "It is very silly," said she to herself: "I have only to take heart, and run along the

bridge, past the hut, and through the yard, and I shall certainly be first." She was already standing by the brook and the clump of firs. "Shall I? No; it is too frightful," said she. A little white dog was standing on the farther side, and barking with might and main. In her terror, Mary thought the dog some monster, and sprang back. "Fy! fy!" said she: "the dolt is gone half way by this time, while I stand here considering." The little dog kept barking, and, as she looked at it more narrowly, it seemed no longer frightful, but, on the contrary, quite pretty: it had a red collar round its neck, with a glittering bell; and as it raised its head, and shook itself in barking, the little bell sounded with the finest tinkle. "Well, I must risk it!" cried she, "I will run for life; quick, quick, I am through; certainly to Heaven, they cannot eat me up alive in half a minute!" And with this, the gay, courageous little Mary sprang along the footbridge; passed the dog, which ceased its barking and began to fawn on her; and in a moment she was standing on the other bank, and the black firs all round concealed from view her father's house, and the rest of the landscape.

But what was her astonishment when here! The loveliest, most variegated flower-garden, lay round her; tulips, roses and lilies were glittering in the fairest colours; blue and gold-red butterflies were wavering in the blossoms; cages of shining wire were hung on the espaliers, with many-coloured birds in them, singing beautiful songs; and children, in short white frocks, with flowing yellow hair and brilliant eyes, were frolicking about; some playing with lambkins, some feeding the birds, or gathering flowers, and giving them to one another; some, again, were eating cherries, grapes and ruddy apricots. No hut was to be seen; but instead of it, a large fair house, with a brazen door and lofty statues, stood glancing in the middle of the space. Mary was confounded with surprise, and knew not what to think; but, not being bashful, she went right up to the first of the children, held out her hand, and wished the little creature good-even.

"Art thou come to visit us, then?" said the glittering child; "I saw thee running, playing on the other side, but thou wert frightened at our little dog."

"So you are not gipsies and rogues," said Mary, "as Andres always told me? He is a stupid thing, and talks of much he does not understand."

"Stay with us," said the strange little girl; "thou wilt like it well."

"But we are running a race."

"Thou wilt find thy comrade soon enough. There, take and eat."

Mary ate, and found the fruit more sweet than any she had ever tasted in her life before; and Andres, and the race, and the prohibition of her parents, were entirely forgotten.

A stately woman, in a shining robe, came towards them, and asked about the stranger child. "Fairest lady," said Mary, "I came running hither by chance, and now they wish to keep me."

"Thou art aware, Zerina," said the lady, "that she can be here but for a little while; besides, thou shouldst have asked my leave."

"I thought," said Zerina, "when I saw her admitted across the bridge, that I might do it; we have often seen her running in the fields, and thou thyself hast taken pleasure in her lively temper. She will have to leave us soon enough."

"No, I will stay here," said the little stranger; "for here it is so beautiful, and here I shall find the prettiest playthings, and store of berries and cherries to boot. On the other side it is not half so grand."

The gold-robed lady went away with a smile; and many of the children now came bounding round the happy Mary in their mirth, and twitched her, and incited her to dance; others brought her lambs, or curious playthings; others made music on instruments, and sang to it.

She kept, however, by the playmate who had first met her; for Zerina was the kindest and loveliest of them all. Little

Mary cried and cried again: "I will stay with you forever; I will stay with you, and you shall be my sisters"; at which the children all laughed, and embraced her. "Now we shall have a royal sport," said Zerina. She ran into the Palace, and returned with a little golden box, in which lay a quantity of seeds, like glittering dust. She lifted of it with her little hand, and scattered some grains on the green earth. Instantly the grass began to move, as in waves; and, after a few moments, bright rose-bushes started from the ground, shot rapidly up, and budded all at once, while the sweetest perfume filled the place. Mary also took a little of the dust, and, having scattered it, she saw white lilies, and the most variegated pinks, pushing up. At a signal from Zerina, the flowers disappeared, and others rose in their room. "Now," said Zerina, "look for something greater." She laid two pine-seeds in the ground, and stamped them in sharply with her foot. Two green bushes stood before them. "Grasp me fast," said she; and Mary threw her arms about the slender form. She felt herself borne upwards; for the trees were springing under them with the greatest speed; the tall pines waved to and fro, and the two children held each other fast embraced, swinging this way and that in the red clouds of the twilight, and kissed each other; while the rest were climbing up and down the trunks with quick dexterity, pushing and teasing one another with loud laughter when they met; if any one fell down in the press, it flew through the air, and sank slowly and surely to the ground. At length Mary was beginning to be frightened; and the other little child sang a few loud tones, and the trees again sank down, and set them on the ground as gradually as they had lifted them before to the clouds.

They next went through the brazen door of the palace. Here many fair women, elderly and young, were sitting in the round hall, partaking of the fairest fruits, and listening to glorious invisible music. In the vaulting of the ceiling, palms, flowers and groves stood painted, among which little

figures of children were sporting and winding in every graceful posture; and with the tones of the music, the images altered and glowed with the most burning colours; now the blue and green were sparkling like radiant light, now these tints faded back in paleness, the purple flamed up, and the gold took fire; and then the naked children seemed to be alive among the flower-garlands, and to draw breath, and emit it through their ruby-coloured lips; so that by fits you could see the glance of their little white teeth, and the lighting up of their azure eyes.

From the hall, a stair of brass led down to a subterranean chamber. Here lay much gold and silver, and precious stones of every hue shone out between them. Strange vessels stood along the walls, and all seemed filled with costly things. The gold was worked into many forms, and glittered with the friendliest red. Many little dwarfs were busied sorting the pieces from the heap, and putting them in the vessels; others, hunch-backed and bandy-legged, with long red noses, were tottering slowly along, half-bent to the ground, under full sacks, which they bore as millers do their grain; and, with much panting, shaking out the gold-dust on the ground. Then they darted awkwardly to the right and left, and caught the rolling balls that were like to run away; and it happened now and then that one in his eagerness overset the other, so that both fell heavily and clumsily to the ground. They made angry faces, and looked askance, as Mary laughed at their gestures and their ugliness. Behind them sat an old crumpled little man, whom Zerina reverently greeted; he thanked her with a grave inclination of his head. He held a sceptre in his hand, and wore a crown upon his brow, and all the other dwarfs appeared to regard him as their master, and obey his nod.

"What more wanted?" asked he, with a surly voice, as the children came a little nearer. Mary was afraid, and did not speak; but her companion answered, they were only come to look about them in the chambers. "Still your old child's

tricks!" replied the dwarf: "Will there never be an end to idleness?" With this, he turned again to his employment, kept his people weighing and sorting the ingots; some he sent away on errands, some he chid with angry tones.

"Who is the gentleman?" said Mary.

"Our Metal-Prince," replied Zerina, as they walked along.

They seemed once more to reach the open air, for they were standing by a lake, yet no sun appeared, and they saw no sky above their heads. A little boat received them, and Zerina steered it diligently forwards. It shot rapidly along. On gaining the middle of the lake, the stranger saw that multitudes of pipes, channels, and brooks, were spreading from the little sea in every direction. "These waters to the right," said Zerina, "flow beneath your garden, and this is why it blooms so freshly; by the other side we get down into the great stream." On a sudden, out of all the channels, and from every quarter of the lake, came a crowd of little children swimming up; some wore garlands of sedge and water-lily; some had red stems of coral, others were blowing on crooked shells; a tumultuous noise echoed merrily from the dark shores; among the children might be seen the fairest women sporting in the waters, and often several of the children sprang about some one of them, and with kisses hung upon her neck and shoulders. All saluted the strangers; and these steered onwards through the revelry out of the lake, into a little river, which grew narrower and narrower. At last the boat came aground. The strangers took their leave, and Zerina knocked against the cliff. This opened like a door, and a female form, all red, assisted them to mount. "Are you all brisk here?" inquired Zerina. "They are just at work," replied the other, "and happy as they could wish; indeed, the heat is very pleasant."

They went up a winding stair, and on a sudden Mary found herself in a most resplendent hall, so that as she entered, her eyes were dazzled by the radiance. Flame-coloured tapestry covered the walls with a purple glow; and

when her eye had grown a little used to it, the stranger saw, to her astonishment, that, in the tapestry, there were figures moving up and down in dancing joyfulness; in form so beautiful, and of so fair proportions, that nothing could be seen more graceful; their bodies were as of red crystal, so that it appeared as if the blood were visible within them, flowing and playing in its courses. They smiled on the stranger, and saluted her with various bows; but as Mary was about approaching nearer them, Zerina plucked her sharply back, crying: "Thou wilt burn thyself, my little Mary, for the whole of it is fire."

Mary felt the heat. "Why do the pretty creatures not come out," said she, "and play with us?"

"As thou livest in the Air," replied the other, "so are they obliged to stay continually in Fire, and would faint and languish if they left it. Look now, how glad they are, how they laugh and shout; those down below spread out the fire-floods everywhere beneath the earth, and thereby the flowers, and fruits, and wine, are made to flourish; these red streams again, are to run beside the brooks of water; and thus the fiery creatures are kept ever busy and glad. But for thee it is too hot here; let us return to the garden."

In the garden, the scene had changed since they left it. The moonshine was lying on every flower; the birds were silent, and the children were asleep in complicated groups, among the green groves. Mary and her friend, however, did not feel fatigue, but walked about in the warm summer night, in abundant talk, till morning.

When the day dawned, they refreshed themselves on fruit and milk, and Mary said: "Suppose we go, by way of change, to the firs, and see how things look there?"

"With all my heart," replied Zerina; "thou wilt see our watchmen too, and they will surely please thee; they are standing up among the trees on the mound." The two proceeded through the flower-garden by pleasant groves, full of nightingales; then they ascended a vine-hill; and at last,

after long following the windings of a clear brook, arrived at the firs, and the height which bounded the domain. "How does it come," said Mary, "that we have to walk so far here, when without, the circuit is so narrow?"

"I know not," said her friend; "but so it is."

They mounted to the dark firs, and a chill wind blew from without in their faces; a haze seemed lying far and wide over the landscape. On the top were many strange forms standing: with mealy, dusty faces; their misshapen heads not unlike those of white owls; they were clad in folded cloaks of shaggy wool; they held umbrellas of curious skins stretched out above them; and they waved and fanned themselves incessantly with large bat's wings, which flared out curiously beside the woollen roquelaures. "I could laugh, yet I am frightened," cried Mary.

"These are our good trusty watchmen," said her playmate; "they stand here and wave their fans, that cold anxiety and inexplicable fear may fall on every one that attempts to approach us. They are covered so, because without it is now cold and rainy, which they cannot bear. But snow, or wind, or cold air, never reaches down to us; here is an everlasting spring and summer: yet if these poor people on the top were not frequently relieved, they would certainly perish."

"But who are you, then?" said Mary, while again descending to the flowery fragrance; "or have you no name at all?"

"We are called the Elves," replied the friendly child; "people talk about us in the Earth, as I have heard."

They now perceived a mighty bustle on the green. "The fair Bird is come!" cried the children to them: all hastened to the hall. Here, as they approached, young and old were crowding over the threshold, all shouting for joy; and from within resounded a triumphant peal of music. Having entered, they perceived the vast circuit filled with the most varied forms, and all were looking upwards to a large Bird

with glancing plumage, that was sweeping slowly round in the dome, and in its stately flight describing many a circle. The music sounded more gaily than before; the colours and lights alternated more rapidly. At last the music ceased; and the Bird, with a rustling noise, floated down upon a glittering crown that hung hovering in air under the high window, by which the hall was lighted from above. His plumage was purple and green, and shining golden streaks played through it; on his head there waved a diadem of feathers, so resplendent that they glanced like jewels. His bill was red, and his legs of a glancing blue. As he moved, the tints gleamed through each other, and the eye was charmed with their radiance. His size was as that of an eagle. But now he opened his glittering beak; and sweetest melodies came pouring from his moved breast, in finer tones than the lovesick nightingale gives forth; still stronger rose the song, and streamed like floods of Light, so that all, the very children themselves, were moved by it to tears of joy and rapture. When he ceased, all bowed before him; he again flew round the dome in circles, then darted through the door, and soared into the light heaven, where he shone far up like a red point, and then soon vanished from their eyes.

"Why are ye all so glad?" inquired Mary, bending to her fair playmate, who seemed smaller than yesterday.

"The King is coming!" said the little one; "many of us have never seen him, and whithersoever he turns his face, there is happiness and mirth; we have long looked for him, more anxiously than you look for spring when winter lingers with you; and now he has announced, by his fair herald, that he is at hand. This wise and glorious Bird, that has been sent to us by the King, is called Phœnix; he dwells far off in Arabia, on a tree, which there is no other that resembles on Earth, as in like manner there is no second Phœnix. When he feels himself grown old, he builds a pile of balm and incense, kindles it, and dies singing; and then from the fragrant ashes, soars up the renewed Phœnix with unlessened

beauty. It is seldom he so wings his course that men behold him; and when once in centuries this does occur, they note it in their annals, and expect remarkable events. But now, my friend, thou and I must part; for the sight of the King is not permitted thee."

Then the lady with the golden robe came through the throng, and beckoning Mary to her, led her into a sequestered walk. "Thou must leave us, my dear child," said she; "the King is to hold his court here for twenty years, perhaps longer; and fruitfulness and blessings will spread far over the land, but chiefly here beside us; all the brooks and rivulets will become more bountiful, all the fields and gardens richer, the wine more generous, the meadows more fertile, and the woods more fresh and green; a milder air will blow, no hail shall hurt, no flood shall threaten. Take this ring, and think of us: but beware of telling any one of our existence; or we must fly this land, and thou and all around will lose the happiness and blessing of our neighbourhood. Once more, kiss thy playmate, and farewell." They issued from the walk; Zerina wept, Mary stooped to embrace her, and they parted. Already she was on the narrow bridge; the cold air was blowing on her back from the firs; the little dog barked with all its might, and rang its little bell; she looked round, then hastened over, for the darkness of the firs, the bleakness of the ruined huts, the shadows of the twilight, were filling her with terror.

"What a night my parents must have had on my account!" said she within herself, as she stept on the green; "and I dare not tell them where I have been, or what wonders I have witnessed, nor indeed would they believe me." Two men passing by saluted her; and as they went along, she heard them say: "What a pretty girl! Where can she come from?" With quickened steps she approached the house: but the trees which were hanging last night loaded with fruit, were now standing dry and leafless; the house was differently painted, and a new barn had been built beside

it. Mary was amazed, and thought she must be dreaming. In this perplexity she opened the door; and behind the table sat her father, between an unknown woman and a stranger youth. "Good God! Father," cried she, "where is my mother?"

"Thy mother!" said the woman, with a forecasting tone, and sprang towards her: "Ha, thou surely canst not—Yes, indeed, indeed thou art my lost, long-lost dear, only Mary!" She had recognised her by a little brown mole beneath the chin, as well as by her eyes and shape. All embraced her, all were moved with joy, and the parents wept. Mary was astonished that she almost reached to her father's stature; and she could not understand how her mother had become so changed and faded; she asked the name of the stranger youth. "It is our neighbour's Andres," said Martin. "How comest thou to us again, so unexpectedly, after seven long years? Where hast thou been? Why didst thou never send us tidings of thee?"

"Seven years!" said Mary, and could not order her ideas and recollections. "Seven whole years?"

"Yes, yes," said Andres, laughing, and shaking her trustfully by the hand; "I have won the race, good Mary; I was at the pear-tree and back again seven years ago, and thou, sluggish creature, art but just returned!"

They again asked, they pressed her; but remembering her instruction, she could answer nothing. It was they themselves chiefly that, by degrees, shaped a story for her: How, having lost her way, she had been taken up by a coach, and carried to a strange remote part, where she could not give the people any notion of her parents' residence; how she was conducted to a distant town, where certain worthy persons brought her up and loved her; how they had lately died, and at length she had recollected her birthplace, and so returned. "No matter how it is!" exclaimed her mother; "enough, that we have thee again, my little daughter, my own, my all!"

Andres waited supper, and Mary could not be at home in anything she saw. The house seemed small and dark; she felt astonished at her dress, which was clean and simple, but appeared quite foreign; she looked at the ring on her finger, and the gold of it glittered strangely, enclosing a stone of burning red. To her father's question, she replied that the ring also was a present from her benefactors.

She was glad when the hour of sleep arrived, and she hastened to her bed. Next morning she felt much more collected; she had now arranged her thoughts a little, and could better stand the questions of the people in the village, all of whom came in to bid her welcome. Andres was there too with the earliest, active, glad, and serviceable beyond all others. The blooming maiden of fifteen had made a deep impression on him; he had passed a sleepless night. The people of the castle likewise sent for Mary, and she had once more to tell her story to them, which was now grown quite familiar to her. The old Count and his Lady were surprised at her good-breeding; she was modest, but not embarrassed; she made answer courteously in good phrases to all their questions; all fear of noble persons and their equipage had passed away from her; for when she measured these halls and forms by the wonders and the high beauty she had seen with the Elves in their hidden abode, this earthly splendour seemed but dim to her, the presence of men was almost mean. The young lords were charmed with her beauty.

It was now February. The trees were budding earlier than usual; the nightingale had never come so soon; the spring rose fairer in the land than the oldest men could recollect it. In every quarter, little brooks gushed out to irrigate the pastures and meadows; the hills seemed heaving, the vines rose higher and higher, the fruit-trees blossomed as they had never done; and a swelling fragrant blessedness hung suspended heavily in rosy clouds over the scene. All prospered beyond expectation no rude day, no tempest

injured the fruits; the wine flowed blushing in immense grapes; and the inhabitants of the place felt astonished, and were captivated as in a sweet dream. The next year was like its forerunner; but men had now become accustomed to the marvellous. In autumn, Mary yielded to the pressing entreaties of Andres and her parents; she was betrothed to him, and in winter they were married.

She often thought with inward longing of her residence behind the fir-trees; she continued serious and still. Beautiful as all that lay around her was, she knew of something yet more beautiful; and from the remembrance of this, a faint regret attuned her nature to soft melancholy. It smote her painfully when her father and mother talked about the gipsies and vagabonds, that dwelt in the dark spot of ground. Often she was on the point of speaking out in defence of those good beings, whom she knew to be the benefactors of the land; especially to Andres, who appeared to take delight in zealously abusing them: yet still she repressed the word that was struggling to escape her bosom. So passed this year; in the next, she was solaced by a little daughter, whom she named Elfrida, thinking of the designation of her friendly Elves.

The young people lived with Martin and Brigitta, the house being large enough for all; and helped their parents in conducting their now extended husbandry. The little Elfrida soon displayed peculiar faculties and gifts; for she could walk at a very early age, and could speak perfectly before she was a twelvemonth old; and after some few years, she had become so wise and clever, and of such wondrous beauty, that all people regarded her with astonishment; and her mother could not keep away the thought that her child resembled one of those shining little ones in the space behind the Firs. Elfrida cared not to be with other children; but seemed to avoid, with a sort of horror, their tumultuous amusements; and liked best to be alone. She would then retire into a corner of the garden, and read, or work diligently with her

needle; often also you might see her sitting, as if deep sunk in thought; or violently walking up and down the alleys, speaking to herself. Her parents readily allowed her to have her will in these things, for she was healthy, and waxed apace; only her strange sagacious answers and observations often made them anxious. "Such wise children do not grow to age," her grandmother, Brigitta, many times observed; "they are too good for this world; the child, besides, is beautiful beyond nature, and will never find its proper place on Earth."

The little girl had this peculiarity, that she was very loath to let herself be served by any one, but endeavoured to do everything herself. She was almost the earliest riser in the house; she washed herself carefully, and dressed without assistance: at night she was equally careful; she took special heed to pack up her clothes and washes with her own hands, allowing no one, not even her mother, to meddle with her articles. The mother humoured her in this caprice, not thinking it of any consequence. But what was her astonishment, when, happening one holiday to insist, regardless of Elfrida's tears and screams, on dressing her out for a visit to the castle, she found upon her breast, suspended by a string, a piece of gold of a strange form, which she directly recognised as one of that sort she had seen in such abundance in the subterranean vault! The little thing was greatly frightened; and at last confessed that she had found it in the garden, and as she liked it much, had kept it carefully: she at the same time prayed so earnestly and pressingly to have it back, that Mary fastened it again on its former place, and, full of thoughts, went out with her in silence to the castle.

Sidewards from the farmhouse lay some offices for the storing of produce and implements; and behind these there was a little green, with an old grove, now visited by no one, as, from the new arrangement of the buildings, it lay too far from the garden. In this solitude Elfrida delighted most;

and it occurred to nobody to interrupt her here, so that frequently her parents did not see her for half a day. One afternoon her mother chanced to be in these buildings, seeking for some lost article among the lumber; and she noticed that a beam of light was coming in, through a chink in the wall. She took a thought of looking through this aperture, and seeing what her child was busied with; and it happened that a stone was lying loose, and could be pushed aside, so that she obtained a view right into the grove. Elfrida was sitting there on a little bench, and beside her the well-known Zerina; and the children were playing, and amusing one another, in the kindliest unity. The Elf embraced her beautiful companion, and said mournfully: "Ah! dear little creature, as I sport with thee, so have I sported with thy mother, when she was a child; but you mortals so soon grow tall and thoughtful! It is very hard: wert thou but to be a child as long as I!"

"Willingly would I do it," said Elfrida; "but they all say, I shall come to sense, and give over playing altogether; for I have great gifts, as they think, for growing wise. Ah! and then I shall see thee no more, thou dear Zerina! Yet it is with us as with the fruit-tree flowers: how glorious the blossoming apple-tree, with its red bursting buds! It looks so stately and broad; and every one, that passes under it, thinks surely something great will come of it; then the sun grows hot, and the buds come joyfully forth; but the wicked kernel is already there, which pushes off and casts away the fair flower's dress; and now, in pain and waxing, it can do nothing more, but must grow to fruit in harvest. An apple, to be sure, is pretty and refreshing; yet nothing to the blossom of spring. So is it also with us mortals: I am not glad in the least at growing to be a tall girl. Ah! could I but once visit you!"

"Since the King is with us," said Zerina, "it is quite impossible; but I will come to thee, my darling, often, often; and none shall see me either here or there. I will pass

invisible through the air, or fly over to thee like a bird. O! we will be much, much together, while thou art still little. What can I do to please thee?"

"Thou must like me very dearly," said Elfrida, "as I like thee in my heart. But come, let us make another rose."

Zerina took the well-known box from her bosom, threw two grains from it on the ground; and instantly a green bush stood before them, with two deep-red roses, bending their heads, as if to kiss each other. The children plucked them smiling, and the bush disappeared. "O that it would not die so soon!" said Elfrida; "this red child, this wonder of the Earth!"

"Give it me here," said the little Elf; then breathed thrice upon the budding rose, and kissed it thrice. "Now," said she, giving back the rose, "it will continue fresh and blooming till winter."

"I will keep it," said Elfrida, "as an image of thee; I will guard it in my little room, and kiss it night and morning, as if it were thyself."

"The sun is setting," said the other; "I must home." They embraced again, and Zerina vanished.

In the evening, Mary clasped her child to her breast, with a feeling of alarm and veneration. She henceforth allowed the good little girl more liberty than formerly; and often calmed her husband when he came to search for the child; which for some time he was wont to do, as her retiredness did not please him; and he feared that, in the end, it might make her silly, or even pervert her understanding. The mother often glided to the chink; and almost always found the bright Elf beside her child, employed in sport, or in earnest conversation.

"Wouldst thou like to fly?" inquired Zerina once.

"O well! How well!" replied Elfrida; and the fairy clasped her mortal playmate in her arms, and mounted with her from the ground, till they hovered above the grove. The mother, in alarm, forgot herself, and pushed out her head in

terror to look after them; when Zerina, from the air, held up her finger, and threatened yet smiled; then descended with the child, embraced her, and disappeared. After this, it happened more than once that Mary was observed by her; and every time, the shining little creature shook her head, or threatened, yet with friendly looks.

Often, in disputing with her husband, Mary had said in her zeal: "Thou dost injustice to the poor people in the hut!" But when Andres pressed her to explain why she differed in opinion from the whole village, nay, from his Lordship himself; and how she could understand it better than the whole of them, she still broke off embarrassed, and became silent. One day, after dinner, Andres grew more violent than ever; and maintained that, by one means or another, the crew must be packed away, as a nuisance to the country; when his wife, in anger, said to him: "Hush! for they are benefactors to thee and to every one of us."

"Benefactors!" cried the other, in astonishment: "These rogues and vagabonds?"

In her indignation, she was now at last tempted to relate to him, under promise of the strictest secrecy, the history of her youth: and as Andres at every word grew more incredulous, and shook his head in mockery, she took him by the hand, and led him to the chink; where, to his amazement, he beheld the glittering Elf sporting with his child, and caressing her in the grove. He knew not what to say; an exclamation of astonishment escaped him, and Zerina raised her eyes. On the instant she grew pale, and trembled violently; not with friendly, but with indignant looks, she made the sign of threatening, and then said to Elfrida: "Thou canst not help it, dearest heart; but they will never learn sense, wise as they believe themselves." She embraced the little one with stormy haste; and then, in the shape of a raven, flew with hoarse cries over the garden, towards the Firs.

In the evening, the little one was very still; she kissed her rose with tears; Mary felt depressed and frightened,

Andres scarcely spoke. It grew dark. Suddenly there went a rustling through the trees; birds flew to and fro with wild screaming, thunder was heard to roll, the Earth shook, and tones of lamentation moaned in the air. Andres and his wife had not courage to rise; they shrouded themselves within the curtains, and with fear and trembling awaited the day. Towards morning, it grew calmer; and all was silent when the Sun, with his cheerful light, rose over the wood.

Andres dressed himself; and Mary now observed that the stone of the ring upon her finger had become quite pale. On opening the door, the sun shone clear on their faces, but the scene around them they could scarcely recognise. The freshness of the wood was gone; the hills were shrunk, the brooks were flowing languidly with scanty streams, the sky seemed grey; and when you turned to the Firs, they were standing there no darker or more dreary than the other trees. The huts behind them were no longer frightful; and several inhabitants of the village came and told about the fearful night, and how they had been across the spot where the gipsies had lived; how these people must have left the place at last, for their huts were standing empty, and within had quite a common look, just like the dwellings of other poor people: some of their household gear was left behind.

Elfrida in secret said to her mother: "I could not sleep last night; and in my fright at the noise, I was praying from the bottom of my heart, when the door suddenly opened, and my playmate entered to take leave of me. She had a travelling pouch slung round her, a hat on her head, and a large staff in her hand. She was very angry at thee; since on thy account she had now to suffer the severest and most painful punishments, as she had always been so fond of thee; for all of them, she said, were very loath to leave this quarter."

Mary forbade her to speak of this; and now the ferryman came across the river, and told them new wonders. As it was growing dark, a stranger man of large size had come to

him, and hired his boat till sunrise; and with this condition, that the boatman should remain quiet in his house, at least should not cross the threshold of his door. "I was frightened," continued the old man, "and the strange bargain would not let me sleep. I slipped softly to the window, and looked towards the river. Great clouds were driving restlessly through the sky, and the distant woods were rustling fearfully; it was as if my cottage shook, and moans and lamentations glided round it. On a sudden, I perceived a white streaming light, that grew broader and broader, like many thousands of falling stars; sparkling and waving, it proceeded forward from the dark Fir-ground, moved over the fields, and spread itself along towards the river. Then I heard a trampling, a jingling, a bustling, and rushing, nearer and nearer; it went forwards to my boat, and all stept into it, men and women, as it seemed, and children; and the tall stranger ferried them over. In the river were by the boat swimming many thousands of glittering forms; in the air white clouds and lights were wavering; and all lamented and bewailed that they must travel forth so far, far away, and leave their beloved dwelling. The noise of the rudder and the water creaked and gurgled between-whiles, and then suddenly there would be silence. Many a time the boat landed, and went back, and was again laden; many heavy casks, too, they took along with them, which multitudes of horrid-looking little fellows carried and rolled; whether they were devils or goblins, Heaven only knows. Then came, in waving brightness, a stately freight; it seemed an old man, mounted on a small white horse, and all were crowding round him. I saw nothing of the horse but its head; for the rest of it was covered with costly glittering cloths and trappings: on his brow the old man had a crown, so bright that, as he came across, I thought the sun was rising there, and the redness of the dawn glimmering in my eyes. Thus it went on all night; I at last fell asleep in the tumult, half in joy, half in terror. In the morning all was still; but the river is,

as it were, run off, and I know not how I am to steer my boat in it now."

The same year there came a blight; the woods died away, the springs ran dry; and the scene, which had once been the joy of every traveller, was in autumn standing waste, naked and bald; scarcely showing here and there, in the sea of sand, a spot or two where grass, with a dingy greenness, still grew up. The fruit-trees all withered, the vines faded away, and the aspect of the place became so melancholy, that the Count, with his people, next year left the castle, which in time decayed and fell to ruins.

Elfrida gazed on her rose day and night with deep longing, and thought of her kind playmate; and as it drooped and withered, so did she also hang her head; and before the spring, the little maiden had herself faded away. Mary often stood upon the spot before the hut, and wept for the happiness that had departed. She wasted herself away like her child, and in a few years she too was gone. Old Martin, with his son-in-law, returned to the quarter where he had lived before.

THE GOBLET

The forenoon bells were sounding from the high cathedral. Over the wide square in front of it were men and women walking to and fro, carriages rolling along, and priests proceeding to their various churches. Ferdinand was standing on the broad stair, with his eyes over the multitude, looking at them as they came up to attend the service. The sunshine glittered on the white stones, all were seeking shelter from the heat. He alone had stood for a long time leaning on a pillar, amid the burning beams, without regarding them; for he was lost in the remembrances which mounted up within his mind. He was calling back his bygone life; and inspiring his soul with the feeling which had penetrated all his being, and swallowed up every other wish in itself. At the same hour, in the past year, had he been standing here, looking at the women and the maidens coming to mass; with indifferent heart, and smiling face, he had viewed the variegated procession; many a kind look had roguishly met his, and many a virgin cheek had blushed; his busy eye had observed the pretty feet, how they mounted the steps, and how the wavering robe fell more or less aside, to let the dainty little ankles come to sight. Then a youthful form had crossed the square: clad in black; slender, and of noble mien, her eyes modestly cast down before her, carelessly she hovered up the steps with lovely grace; the silken robe lay round that fairest of forms, and rocked itself as in music about the moving limbs; she was mounting the highest step when by chance she raised her head, and struck his eye with a ray of the purest azure. He was pierced as if by lightning. Her foot caught the robe; and quickly as he darted towards her, he

could not prevent her having, for a moment, in the most charming posture, lain kneeling at his feet. He raised her; she did not look at him, she was all one blush; nor did she answer his inquiry whether she was hurt. He followed her into the church: his soul saw nothing but the image of that form kneeling before him, and that loveliest of bosoms bent towards him. Next day he visited the threshold of the church again; for him that spot was consecrated ground. He had been intending to pursue his travels, his friends were expecting him impatiently at home; but from henceforth his native country was here, his heart and its wishes were inverted. He saw her often, she did not shun him; yet it was but for a few separate and stolen moments; for her wealthy family observed her strictly, and still more a powerful and jealous bridegroom. They mutually confessed their love, but knew not what to do; for he was a stranger, and could offer his beloved no such splendid fortune as she was entitled to expect. He now felt his poverty; yet when he reflected on his former way of life, it seemed to him that he was passing rich; for his existence was rendered holy, his heart floated for ever in the fairest emotion; Nature was now become his friend, and her beauty lay revealed to him; he felt himself no longer alien from worship and religion; and he now crossed this threshold, and the mysterious dimness of the temple, with far other feelings than in former days of levity. He withdrew from his acquaintances, and lived only to love. When he walked through her street, and saw her at the windows, he was happy for the day. He had often spoken to her in the dusk of the evening; her garden was adjacent to a friend's, who, however, did not know his secret. Thus a year had passed away.

All these scenes of his new existence again moved through his remembrance. He raised his eyes; that noble form was even then gliding over the square; she shone out of the confused multitude like a sun. A lovely music sounded in his longing heart; and as she approached, he retired into the

church. He offered her the holy water; her white fingers trembled as they touched his, she bowed with grateful kindness. He followed her, and knelt down near her. His whole heart was melting in sadness and love; it seemed to him as if, from the wounds of longing, his being were bleeding away in fervent prayers; every word of the priest went through him, every tone of the music poured new devotion into his bosom; his lips quivered, as the fair maiden pressed the crucifix of her rosary to her ruby mouth. How dim had been his apprehension of this Faith and this Love before! The priest elevated the Host, and the bell sounded; she bowed more humbly, and crossed her breast; and, like a flash, it struck through all his powers and feelings, and the image on the altar seemed alive, and the coloured dimness of the windows as a light of paradise; tears flowed fast from his eyes, and allayed the swelling fervour of his heart.

The service was concluded. He again offered her the consecrated font; they spoke some words, and she withdrew. He stayed behind, in order to excite no notice; he looked after her till the hem of her garment vanished round the corner; and he felt like the wanderer, weary and astray, from whom, in the thick forest, the last gleam of the setting sun departs. He awoke from his dream, as an old withered hand slapped him on the shoulder, and some one called him by name.

He started back, and recognised his friend, the testy old Albert, who lived apart from men, and whose solitary house was open to Ferdinand alone: "Do you remember our engagement?" said the hoarse husky voice. "O yes," said Ferdinand: "and will you perform your promise today?"

"This very hour," replied the other, "if you like to follow me."

They walked through the city to a remote street, and there entered a large edifice. "Today," said the old man, "you must push through with me into my most solitary chamber, that we may not be disturbed." They passed

through many rooms, then along some stairs; they wound their way through passages: and Ferdinand, who had thought himself familiar with the house, was now astonished at the multitude of apartments, and the singular arrangement of the spacious building; but still more that the old man, a bachelor, and without family, should inhabit it by himself, with a few servants, and never let out any part of the superfluous room to strangers. Albert at length unbolted the door, and said: "Now, here is the place." They entered a large high chamber, hung round with red damask, which was trimmed with golden listings; the chairs were of the same stuff; and, through heavy red silk curtains covering the windows, came a purple light. "Wait a little," said the old man, and went into another room. Ferdinand took up some books: he found them to contain strange unintelligible characters, circles and lines, with many curious plates; and from the little he could read, they seemed to be works on alchemy; he was aware already that the old man had the reputation of a gold-maker. A lute was lying on the table, singularly overlaid with mother-of-pearl, and coloured wood; and representing birds and flowers in very splendid forms. The star in the middle was a large piece of mother-of-pearl, worked in the most skilful manner into many intersecting circular figures, almost like the centre of a window in a Gothic church. "You are looking at my instrument," said Albert, coming back; "it is two hundred years old: I brought it with me as a memorial of my journey into Spain. But let us leave all that, and do you take a seat."

They sat down beside the table, which was likewise covered with a red cloth; and the old man placed upon it something which was carefully wrapped up. "From pity to your youth," he began, "I promised lately to predict to you whether you could ever become happy or not; and this promise I will in the present hour perform, though you hold the matter only as a jest. You need not be alarmed; for what I purpose will take place without danger; no dread invocations shall be

made by me, nor shall any horrid apparition terrify your senses. The business I am on may fail in two ways: either if you do not love so truly as you have been willing to persuade me; for then my labour is in vain, and nothing will disclose itself; or, if you shall disturb the oracle and destroy it by a useless question, or a hasty movement, should you leave your seat and dissipate the figure; you must therefore promise me to keep yourself quite still."

Ferdinand gave his word, and the old man unfolded from its cloths the packet he had placed on the table. It was a golden goblet, of very skilful and beautiful workmanship. Round its broad foot ran a garland of flowers, intertwined with myrtles, and various other leaves and fruits, worked out in high chasing with dim and with brilliant gold. A corresponding ring, but still richer, with figures of children, and wild little animals playing with them, or flying from them, wound itself about the middle of the cup. The bowl was beautifully turned; it bent itself back at the top as if to meet the lips; and within, the gold sparkled with a red glow. Old Albert placed the cup between him and the youth, whom he then beckoned to come nearer. "Do you not feel something," said he, "when your eye loses itself in this splendour?"

"Yes," answered Ferdinand, "this brightness glances into my inmost heart; I might almost say I felt it like a kiss in my longing bosom."

"It is right, then!" said the old man. "Now let not your eyes wander any more, but fix them steadfastly on the glittering of this gold, and think as intensely as you can of the woman whom you love."

Both sat quiet for a while, looking earnestly upon the gleaming cup. Ere long, however, Albert, with mute gestures, began, at first slowly, then faster, and at last in rapid movements, to whirl his outstretched finger in a constant circle round the glitter of the bowl. Then he paused, and recommenced his circles in the opposite direction. After this had lasted for a little, Ferdinand began to think he heard the

sound of music; it came as from without, in some distant street, but soon the tones approached, they quivered more distinctly through the air; and at last no doubt remained with him that they were flowing from the hollow of the cup. The music became stronger, and of such piercing power, that the young man's heart was throbbing to the notes, and tears were flowing from his eyes. Busily old Albert's hand now moved in various lines across the mouth of the goblet; and it seemed as if sparks were issuing from his fingers, and darting in forked courses to the gold, and tinkling as they met it. The glittering points increased; and followed, as if strung on threads, the movements of his finger to and fro; they shone with various hues, and crowded more and more together till they joined in unbroken lines. And now it seemed as if the old man, in the red dusk, were stretching a wondrous net over the gleaming gold; for he drew the beams this way and that at pleasure, and wove up with them the opening of the bowl; they obeyed him, and remained there like a cover, wavering to and fro, and playing into one another. Having so fixed them, he again described the circle round the rim; the music then moved off, grew fainter and fainter, and at last died away. While the tones departed, the sparkling net quivered to and fro as in pain. In its increasing agitation it broke in pieces; and the beaming threads rained down in drops into the cup; but as the drops fell, there arose from them a ruddy cloud, which moved within itself in manifold eddies, and mounted over the brim like foam. A bright point darted with exceeding swiftness through the cloudy circle, and began to form the Image in the midst of it. On a sudden there looked out from the vapour as it were an eye; over this came a playing and curling as of golden locks; and soon there went a soft blush up and down the shadow, and Ferdinand beheld the smiling face of his beloved, the blue eyes, the tender cheeks, the fair red mouth. The head waved to and fro; rose clearer and more visible upon the slim white neck, and nodded towards

the enraptured youth. Old Albert still kept casting circles round the cup; and out of it emerged the glancing shoulders; and as the fair form mounted more and more from its golden couch, and bent in lovely kindness this way and that, the soft curved parted breasts appeared, and on their summits two loveliest rose-buds glancing with sweet secret red. Ferdinand fancied he felt the breath, as the beloved form bent waving towards him, and almost touched him with its glowing lips; in his rapture he forgot his promise and himself; he started up and clasped that ruby mouth to him with a kiss, and meant to seize those lovely arms, and lift the enrapturing form from its golden prison. Instantly a violent trembling quivered through the lovely shape; the head and body broke away as in a thousand lines; and a rose was lying at the bottom of the goblet, in whose redness that sweet smile still seemed to play. The longing young man caught it and pressed it to his lips; and in his burning ardour it withered and melted into air.

"Thou hast kept thy promise badly," said the old man, with an angry tone; "thou hast none but thyself to blame." He again wrapped up the goblet, drew aside the curtains, and opened a window: the clear daylight broke in; and Ferdinand, in sadness, and with many fruitless excuses, left old Albert still in anger.

In an agitated mood, he hastened through the streets of the city. Without the gate, he sat down beneath the trees. She had told him in the morning that she was to go that night, with some relations, to the country. Intoxicated with love, he rose, he sat, he wandered in the wood: that fair kind form was still before him, as it flowed and mounted from the glowing gold; he looked that she would now step forth to meet him in the splendour of her beauty, and again that loveliest image broke away in pieces from his eyes; and he was indignant at himself that, by his restless passion and the tumult of his senses, he should have destroyed the shape, and perhaps his hopes, forever.

As the walk, in the afternoon, became crowded, he withdrew deeper into the thickets; but he still kept the distant highway in his eye; and every coach that issued from the gate was carefully examined by him.

The night approached. The setting sun was throwing forth its red splendour, when from the gate rushed out the richly gilded coach, gleaming with a fiery brightness in the glow of evening. He hastened towards it. Her eye had already seized him. Kindly and smilingly she leaned her glittering bosom from the window; he caught her soft salutation and signal; he was standing by the coach, her full look fell on his, and as she drew back to move away, the rose which had adorned her bosom flew out, and lay at his feet. He lifted it, and kissed it; and he felt as if it presaged to him that he should not see his loved one any more, that now his happiness had faded away from him forever.

Hurried steps were passing up stairs and down; the whole house was in commotion; all was bustle and tumult, preparing for the great festivities of the morrow. The mother was the gladdest and most active; the bride heeded nothing, but retired into her chamber to meditate upon her changing destiny. The family were still looking for their elder son, the captain, with his wife; and for two elder daughters, with their husbands: Leopold, the younger, was maliciously busied in increasing the disorder, and deepening the tumult; perplexing all, while he pretended to be furthering it. Agatha, his still unmarried sister, was in vain endeavouring to make him reasonable, and persuade him simply to do nothing, and to let the rest have peace; but her mother said: "Never mind him and his folly; for today a little more or less of it amounts to nothing; only this I beg of one and all of you, that as I have so much to think about already, you would trouble me with no fresh tidings, unless it be of something that especially concerns us. I care not whether any one have

let some china fall, whether one spoon or two spoons are wanting, whether any of the stranger servants have been breaking windows; with all such freaks as these, I beg you would not vex me by recounting them. Were these days of tumult over, we will reckon matters; not till then."

"Bravely spoken, mother!" cried her son; "these sentiments are worthy of a governor. And if it chance that any of the maids should break her neck; the cook get tipsy, or set the chimney on fire; the butler, for joy, let all the malmsey run upon the floor, or down his throat, you shall not hear a word of such small tricks. If, indeed, an earthquake were to overset the house! that, my dear mother, could not be kept secret."

"When will he leave his folly!" said the mother: "What must thy sisters think, when they find thee every jot as riotous as when they left thee two years ago?"

"They must do justice to my force of character," said Leopold, "and grant that I am not so changeable as they or their husbands, who have altered so much within these few years, and so little to their advantage."

The bridegroom now entered, and inquired for the bride. Her maid was sent to call her. "Has Leopold made my request to you, my dear mother?" said he.

"I did, forsooth!" said Leopold. "There is such confusion here among us, not one of them can think a reasonable thought."

The bride entered, and the young pair joyfully saluted one another. "The request I meant," continued the bridegroom, "is this: That you would not take it ill, if I should bring another guest into your house, which, in truth, is full enough already."

"You are aware yourself," replied the mother, "that extensive as it is, I could scarcely find another chamber."

"Notwithstanding, I have partly managed it already," cried Leopold; "I have had the large apartment furbished up."

"Why, that is quite a miserable place," replied the mother; "for many years it has been nothing but a lumber-room."

"But it is splendidly repaired," said Leopold; "and our friend, for whom it is intended, does not mind such matters, he desires nothing but our love. Besides, he has no wife, and likes to be alone; it is the very place for him. We have had enough of trouble in persuading him to come, and show himself again among his fellow-creatures."

"Not your dismal conjuror and gold-maker, certainly?" cried Agatha.

"No other," said the bridegroom, "if you will still call him so."

"Then do not let him, mother," said the sister. "What should a man like that do here? I have seen him on the street with Leopold, and I was positively frightened at his face. The old sinner, too, almost never goes to church; he loves neither God nor man; and it cannot come to good to bring such infidels under the roof, on a solemnity like this. Who knows what may be the consequence!"

"To hear her talk!" said Leopold, in anger. "Thou condemnest without knowing him; and because the cut of his nose does not please thee, and he is no longer young and handsome, thou concludest him a wizard, and a servant of the Devil."

"Grant a place in your house, dear mother," said the bridegroom, "to our old friend, and let him take a part in our general joy. He seems, my dear Agatha, to have endured much suffering, which has rendered him distrustful and misanthropic; he avoids all society, his only exceptions are Leopold and myself. I owe him much; it was he that first gave my mind a good direction; nay, I may say, it is he alone that has rendered me perhaps worthy of my Julia's love."

"He lends me all his books," continued Leopold; "and, what is more, his old manuscripts; and what is more still,

his money, on my bare word. He is a man of the most christian turn, my little sister. And who knows, when thou hast seen him better, whether thou wilt not throw off thy coyness, and take a fancy to him, ugly as he now appears to thee?"

"Well, bring him to us," said the mother; "I have had to hear so much of him from Leopold already, that I have a curiosity to be acquainted with him. Only you must answer for it, that I cannot lodge him better."

Meantime strangers were announced. They were members of the family, the married daughters, and the officer; they had brought their children with them. The good old lady was delighted to behold her grandsons; all was welcoming, and joyful talk; and Leopold and the bridegroom, having also given and received their greeting, went away to seek their ancient melancholic friend.

The latter lived most part of the year in the country, about a league from town; but he also kept a little dwelling for himself in a garden near the gate. Here, by chance, the young men had become acquainted with him. They now found him in a coffee-house, where they had previously agreed to meet. As the evening had come on, they brought him, after some little conversation, directly to the house.

The stranger met a kindly welcome from the mother; the daughters stood a little more aloof from him. Agatha especially was shy, and carefully avoided his looks. But the first general compliments were scarcely over, when the old man's eye appeared to settle on the bride, who had entered the apartment later; he seemed as if transported, and it was observed that he was struggling to conceal a tear. The bridegroom rejoiced in his joy, and happening sometime after to be standing with him by a side at the window, he took his hand, and asked him: "Now, what think you of my lovely Julia? Is she not an angel?"

"O my friend!" replied the old man, with emotion, "such

grace and beauty I have never seen; or rather, I should say, (for that expression was not just), she is so fair, so ravishing, so heavenly, that I feel as if I had long known her; as if she were to me, utter stranger though she is, the most familiar form of my imagination, some shape which had always been an inmate of my heart."

"I understand you," said the young man: "yes, the truly beautiful, the great and sublime, when it overpowers us with astonishment and admiration, still does not surprise us as a thing foreign, never heard of, never seen; but, on the other hand, our own inmost nature in such moments becomes clear to us, our deepest remembrances are awakened, our dearest feelings made alive."

The stranger, during supper, mixed but little in the conversation; his looks were fixed on the bride, so earnestly and constantly, that she at last became embarrassed and alarmed. The captain told of a campaign which he had served in; the rich merchant of his speculations and the bad times; the country gentleman of the improvements which he meant to make in his estate.

Supper being done, the bridegroom took his leave, returning for the last time to his lonely chamber; for in future it was settled that the married pair were to live in the mother's house, their chambers were already furnished. The company dispersed, and Leopold conducted the stranger to his room. "You will excuse us," said he, as they went along, "for having been obliged to lodge you rather far away, and not so comfortably as our mother wished; but you see, yourself, how numerous our family is, and more relations are to come tomorrow. For one thing, you will not run away from us; there is no finding of your course through this enormous house."

They went through several passages, and Leopold at last took leave, and bade his guest good-night. The servant placed two wax-lights on the table; then asked the stranger whether he should help him to undress, and as the latter

waived his help in that particular, he also went away, and the stranger found himself alone.

"How does it chance, then," said he, walking up and down, "that this Image springs so vividly from my heart today? I forgot the long past, and thought I saw herself. I was again young, and her voice sounded as of old; I thought I was awakening from a heavy dream; but no, I am now awake, and those fair moments were but a sweet delusion."

He was too restless to sleep; he looked at some pictures on the walls, and then round on the chamber. "Today," cried he, "all is so familiar to me, I could almost fancy I had known this house and this apartment of old." He tried to settle his remembrances, and lifted some large books which were standing in a corner. As he turned their leaves, he shook his head. A lute-case was leaning on the wall; he opened it, and found a strange old instrument, time-worn, and without the strings. "No, I am not mistaken!" cried he, in astonishment; "this lute is too remarkable; it is the Spanish lute of my long-departed friend, old Albert! Here are his magic books; this is the chamber where he raised for me that blissful vision; the red of the tapestry is faded, its golden hem is become dim; but strangely vivid in my heart is all pertaining to those hours. It was for this the fear went over me as I was coming hither, through these long complicated passages where Leopold conducted me. O Heaven! On this very table did the Shape rise budding forth, and grow up as if watered and refreshed by the redness of the gold. The same image smiled upon me here, which has almost driven me crazy in the hall tonight; in that hall where I have walked so often in trustful speech with Albert!"

He undressed, but slept very little. Early in the morning he was up, and looking at the room again; he opened the window, and the same gardens and buildings were lying before him as of old, only many other houses had been built since then. "Forty years have vanished," sighed he, "since that

afternoon; and every day of those bright times has a longer life than all the intervening space."

He was called to the company. The morning passed in varied talk · at last the bride entered in her marriage-dress. As the old man noticed her, he fell into a state of agitation, such that every one observed it. They proceeded to the church, and the marriage-ceremony was performed. The party was again at home, when Leopold inquired: "Now, mother, how do you like our friend, the good morose old gentleman?"

"I had figured him by your description," said she, "much more frightful; he is mild and sympathetic, and might gain from one an honest trust in him."

"Trust?" cried Agatha; "in these burning frightful eyes, these thousandfold wrinkles, that pale sunk mouth, that strange laugh of his, which looks and sounds so mockingly? No; God keep me from such friends! If evil spirits ever take the shape of men, they must assume some shape like this."

"Perhaps a younger and more handsome one," replied the mother; "but I cannot recognise the good old man in thy description. One easily observes that he is of a violent temperament, and has inured himself to lock up his feelings in his own bosom; perhaps, too, as Leopold was saying, he may have encountered many miseries; so he is grown mistrustful, and has lost that simple openness, which is especially the portion of the happy."

The rest of the party entered, and broke off their conversation. Dinner was served up; and the stranger sat between Agatha and the rich merchant. When the toasts were beginning, Leopold cried out: "Now, stop a little, worthy friends; we must have the golden goblet down for this, then let it travel round."

He was rising, but his mother beckoned him to keep his seat: "Thou wilt not find it," said she, "for the plate is all stowed elsewhere." She walked out rapidly to seek it herself.

"How brisk and busy is our good old lady still!" observed

the merchant. "See how nimbly she can move, with all her breadth and weight, and reckoning sixty by this time of day. Her face is always bright and joyful, and today she is particularly happy, for she sees herself made young again in Julia."

The stranger gave assent, and the lady entered with the goblet. It was filled with wine, and began to circulate, each toasting what was dearest and most precious to him. Julia gave the welfare of her husband, he the love of his fair Julia; and thus did every one as it became his turn. The mother lingered, as the goblet came to her.

"Come, quick with it," said the captain, somewhat hastily and rudely; "we know, you reckon all men faithless, and not one among them worthy of a woman's love. What, then, is dearest to you?"

His mother looked at him, while the mildness of her brow was on a sudden overspread with angry seriousness. "Since my son," said she, "knows me so well, and can judge my mind so rigorously, let me be permitted *not* to speak what I was thinking of, and let him endeavour, by a life of constant love, to falsify what he gives out as my opinion." She pushed the goblet on, without drinking, and the company was for a while embarrassed and disturbed.

"It is reported," said the merchant, in a whisper, turning to the stranger, "that she did not love her husband; but another, who proved faithless to her. She was then, it seems, the finest woman in the city."

When the cup reached Ferdinand, he gazed upon it with astonishment; for it was the very goblet out of which old Albert had called forth to him the lovely shadow. He looked in upon the gold, and the waving of the wine; his hand shook; it would not have surprised him, if from the magic bowl that glowing Form had again mounted up, and brought with it his vanished youth. "No!" said he, after some time, half-aloud, "it is wine that is gleaming here!"

"Ay, what else?" cried the merchant, laughing: "Drink and be merry."

A thrill of terror passed over the old man; he pronounced the name "Francesca" in a vehement tone, and set the goblet to his lips. The mother cast upon him an inquiring and astonished look.

"Whence is this bright goblet?" said Ferdinand, who also felt ashamed of his embarrassment.

"Many years ago, long ere I was born," said Leopold, "my father bought it, with this house and all its furniture, from an old solitary bachelor; a silent man, whom the neighbours thought a dealer in the Black Art."

The stranger did not say that he had known this old man; for his whole being was too much perplexed, too like an enigmatic dream, to let the rest look into it, even from afar.

The cloth being withdrawn, he was left alone with the mother, as the young ones had retired to make ready for the ball. "Sit down by me," said the mother; "we will rest, for our dancing years are past; and if it is not rude, allow me to inquire whether you have seen our goblet elsewhere, or what it was that moved you so intensely?"

"O my lady," said the old man, "pardon my foolish violence and emotion; but ever since I crossed your threshold, I feel as if I were no longer myself; every moment I forget that my head is grey, that the hearts which loved me are dead. Your beautiful daughter, who is now celebrating the gladdest day of her existence, is so like a maiden whom I knew and adored in my youth, that I could reckon it a miracle. Like, did I say? No, she is not like; it is she herself! In this house, too, I have often been; and once I became acquainted with this cup in a manner I shall not forget." Here he told her his adventure. "On the evening of that day," concluded he, "in the park, I saw my loved one for the last time, as she was passing in her coach. A rose fell from her bosom; this I gathered; she herself was lost to me, for she proved faithless, and soon after married."

"God in Heaven!" cried the lady, violently moved, and starting up, "thou art not Ferdinand?"

"It is my name," replied he.

"I am Francesca," said the lady.

They sprang forward to embrace, then started suddenly back. Each viewed the other with investigating looks: both strove again to evolve from the ruins of Time those lineaments which of old they had known and loved in one another; and as, in dark tempestuous nights, amid the flight of black clouds, there are moments when solitary stars ambiguously twinkle forth, to disappear next instant, so to these two was there shown now and then from the eyes, from the brow and lips, the transitory gleam of some well-known feature; and it seemed as if their Youth stood in the distance, weeping smiles. He bowed down, and kissed her hand, while two big drops rolled from his eyes. They then embraced each other cordially.

"Is thy wife dead?" inquired she.

"I was never married," sobbed the other.

"Heavens!" cried she, wringing her hands, "then it is I who have been faithless! But no, not faithless. On returning from the country, where I stayed two months, I heard from every one, thy friends as well as mine, that thou wert long ago gone home, and married in thy own country. They showed me the most convincing letters, they pressed me vehemently, they profited by my despondency, my indignation; and so it was that I gave my hand to another, a deserving husband; but my heart and my thoughts were always thine."

"I never left this town," said Ferdinand; "but after a while I heard that thou wert married. They wished to part us, and they have succeeded. Thou art a happy mother; I live in the past, and all thy children I will love as if they were my own. But how strange that we should never once have met!"

"I seldom went abroad," said she; "and as my husband took another name, soon after we were married, from a property which he inherited, thou couldst have no suspicion that we were so near together."

"I avoided men," said Ferdinand, "and lived for solitude. Leopold is almost the only one that has attracted me, and led me out amongst my fellows. O my beloved friend, it is like a frightful spectre-story, to think how we lost, and have again found each other!"

As the young people entered, the two were dissolved in tears, and in the deepest emotion. Neither of them told what had occurred, the secret seemed too holy. But ever after, the old man was the friend of the house; and Death alone parted these two beings, who had found each other so strangely, to reunite them in a short time, beyond the power of separation.

END OF VOL. I.

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